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FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

IN FEBRUARY, 1855.

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Christ in the Wilderness.

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1855.

BY THE

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See after
page 154
& then after
p. 118

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These four sermons are printed as they were preached, with the exception of the second, in which three omissions were made for the sake of abbreviation, the sermon having appeared to be too long. These omissions are noted at the end of the volume.

In handling the very delicate questions which are brought under notice in the first two sermons, I can hardly venture to hope that I have always expressed myself with sufficient precision and accuracy. Some passages and expressions which have been remarked upon by friends I have attempted to explain in the notes, to which I beg to refer the reader.

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Christ in the Wilderness.

SERMON I.

S. MARK i. 12, 13.

“And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him.”

THE Sundays upon which I am appointed, on the present occasion, to occupy this pulpit, are the First Sunday in Lent and the three Sundays preceding. It is therefore my lot to preach to you during that period which may be regarded as preparatory to Lent, and to accompany you into the Lenten season itself. And in considering what subject might be conveniently chosen as a ground for doctrine and exhortation at such a period of the Christian year, I have found that my thoughts have fixed themselves upon that passage in the life of our Lord, which is connected by the Church so

closely with the Lenten season, namely, the Temptation in the Wilderness.

In taking this mysterious portion of our Saviour's life for the subject of my sermons, I am entering upon ground which has already frequently been trodden, and that by very masters in the schools. I do not forget how that in the remembrance of many of us this same subject was treated in this church, with that power of thought and language, and that abundance of theological learning which so distinguished the late lamented Dr Mill. Nevertheless it may well be asked, what subject is not old? what subject has not been examined and discussed hundreds of times between the days of the apostles and the present? and if there be one which stands out more than others, as illustrating the life and character of Christ, or as exemplifying what ought to be the life and character of Christians, is it not probable that this more frequently than others will have been seized upon by Christian preachers as a ground upon which to stand when speaking on Christ's behalf?

But I need hardly make any such apology for undertaking to speak upon a passage in the life of

Christ; for the very fact that the text which I have read is a portion of His *life* guarantees to it a living energy, and forbids us to imagine that the thoughts which it is intended to suggest can be exhausted while the world lasts. We, who stand before God not upon the ground of any doctrines in philosophy, but upon the faith that Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again, may well find ample occupation both for our heads and for our hearts in contemplating Him time after time, and year after year, in any of those wonderful deeds and not less wonderful sufferings, by which He demonstrated the greatness of His being and the reality of His love. For this is one great advantage which we have in being permitted to read the actual history of Christ; the religion built upon such a foundation can be no dry bundle of doctrines which can be sorted and classed and numbered, rather will it be itself a living thing, ever throwing new light upon the history of mankind,—ever throwing new life into old doctrines, and making them powerful as agents of moral regeneration,—ever guiding the practice of those, who, believing that no other can shew them the words of eternal life, are content to

take Christ's yoke upon them and learn of Him. And with regard to that portion of history with which I am now concerned, is it not likely that we shall find it peculiarly full of lessons both as to doctrine and practice? if the blessed Son of God did really do battle with the Tempter in the solitude of the wilderness, may we not confidently trust that the endeavour to understand the meaning of the combat is a worthy exercise for His disciples; and that the reverent contemplation of the scene, and companionship with Christ in His solitude, are among the best helps that we ourselves can use in our combat against the world, the flesh, and the devil?

I invite you therefore, Christian brethren, to study the history of the Lord's temptations from several points of view, and to see what they will teach us. And in doing so I shall avoid a variety of questions, to which recent speculations concerning the Life of our Lord might seem to invite our thoughts. I do not, for instance, intend to discuss the question, in what sense the narrative is historical, or whether it may be spoken of as symbolical, or by what name its manifestly mysterious character

may be most fitly described—"whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth;"—nor yet would it seem to me useful to inquire, whether the presence of the Tempter was in bodily shape or no: all such treatment of the subject has its proper place, but *that proper place I imagine is not here*; or at least, I, for my part, regarding the duty which I have to perform, as the minister of Christ to those who have an actual conflict to sustain against that same spiritual enemy who assaulted Him, cannot but feel that there are questions much more nearly concerning our life and our practice, to which I would gladly grant precedence. Indeed I may state it as the result of my own experience, and it is a result which will I believe be gladly endorsed by all those who have long been ministers of the Gospel, and in which you, my young Christian brethren, will one day sympathize, that the longer a Christian minister lives and the more earnestly he meditates upon the powers and responsibilities of his office, the more he will feel disposed to direct the minds of Christians to the great points of practice and duty, and the less to matters of painful and unsettling controversy. And

it will be with this feeling predominant that I shall endeavour to study the history of Christ in the wilderness. I shall not deny that questions such as those to which I have alluded require discussion ; I shall not condemn as heretical every interpretation of the story, which is different from the meaning which the words of the evangelists might convey to a simple mind ; but I content myself with stating my belief, that the sacred writers have under the guidance of the Divine Spirit preserved for us an account of a mysterious passage in the life of Christ, which transcends at every point human experience and human language, in the truest and best form in which it could have been preserved. You may call it a spiritual history, or you may doubt whether it be historical, or you may question whether it be not figurative, or symbolical, but it is much better to say that it is *true*, and that as being true it deserves the most reverent and affectionate study from all those, who see in the life and experience of Christ the idea and pattern of their own. Moreover an additional interest is given to the history, and its truth is put in a still clearer light, by the consideration that it was probably

expressed in human words by the lips of the Lord Himself: it is contrary to the general character of His teaching to suppose, that during the period preceding His death He would reveal to His disciples the tale of His conflict; but we may well believe, that in the intercourse of the forty days which preceded the Ascension, this would be one of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," concerning which the Lord conversed with His apostles. And if so, one does not wonder that three Evangelists should have recorded the story, and that the two who give the details should have done so with such near agreement; how could the apostles ever forget a portion of their Lord's life, which had come to their knowledge thus? how could their feelings fail to be deepened, as to the labour and travail of soul with which Christ had founded His kingdom, when they heard that this personal combat with the powers of darkness was at the threshold of the work? and how could they who wrote it for future ages fail to perceive, that they were recording not merely an accidental portion of the history, but one of those leading cardinal facts, which would throw light upon the life of

Christ, and supply lessons for His disciples, till time should be no more ?

I have read as a text the compressed account of the temptations which is given by S. Mark. I have done so, not because I am intending to neglect the details which S. Matthew and S. Luke have preserved for us, but because I wish to indicate that each of my sermons will deal with the history of the temptations as a whole ; I do not intend to consider one temptation to-day and another next Sunday, but to take upon each occasion the whole history, and regard it from one particular point of view. To-day I wish to regard the history as it illustrates the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is, as I believe, a very important view, and one which has not been so commonly treated as some others. That the connexion between the two histories, I mean between that of Christ asserting in the wilderness His power over Satan and that of Christ founding His kingdom in the world, is not a mere theological fancy but a living organic connexion, would seem to be evident from the place in our Lord's life which the retirement into the wilderness occupies. You will

remember that there is a very marked agreement among the three evangelists upon this point: differing as they do from one another as to their method of telling the same story, and manifest as it is that a strict chronological arrangement was not one of the conditions under which they wrote, we still find an exact coincidence as to the consecutive order of these three events, the baptism, the temptation, and the commencement of the public ministry. All three evangelists inform us, that it was immediately after Jesus had been baptized by S. John, and had been declared by the descent of the Spirit to be "the beloved Son in whom God was well pleased," that He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness; and after the conclusion of the temptations they not only do not tell us of any important circumstances, but they imply that there were none such, until after the imprisonment of John the Baptist Jesus began Himself to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God. We may therefore, I think, take it for granted, that such was the real order of events, and that the order has a meaning; we may assume that the retirement into the wilderness, the fasting, and the temptation, were

no less a real prelude to the public ministry, than the baptism and the descent of the Spirit. If the combat of the Lord with Satan had been merely an example of ordinary spiritual combat, a specimen of what His disciples would have to undergo, and an example of the manner in which they must fight and overcome, then the conflict might apparently have had as fitting a place at any other period of the Lord's life ; but because we find that the conflict has been especially marked, not merely as *an* event which at some time or other took place, but as occupying a definite and critical point of the history, therefore we should do well to consider it in that particular light which its place in the history suggests.

If one may venture to speculate as to the thoughts which occupied the mind of the Lord during those forty days of fasting, upon what subject should we imagine that they would be fixed ?—speculate ! there is no need for speculation ; there is but one subject that could find entrance into the mind of Christ ; or if it be too bold to say this, at least we can mention with confidence one subject, which would very seldom be absent from His

thoughts: the manner in which His Father's business was to be performed, the preaching of His Gospel, the foundation of His kingdom,—these are thoughts which would occupy His mind; I cannot say how the treatment of them would be modified by the union of the human and divine in the person of our Lord, how far as a man He would feel oppressed with the burden which God had laid upon Him, to what extent His human feelings would shrink from the anticipated contradiction of sinners and opposition of the powers of evil, how far even then that prayer may have struggled to find vent which was uttered on the eve of the Passion, “Father, let this cup pass from Me;” but of this we may be quite sure, that in some manner the difficulties of His life would come before Him, that the efforts of Satan to destroy His work would weigh upon His soul, and that He would lose no time in preparing Himself for the conflict and putting on the whole armour of God. And shall we wonder if under these circumstances the attack made upon Him by the enemy should represent, as it were by a picture, the character of that conflict with the powers of evil which belonged to His actual ministry? shall

we not rather expect, that if we place side by side the opposition made to the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the first onslaught of Satan in the wilderness, we shall find between them marks of similarity and points of mutual illustration?

In treating the subject thus however I must remark, that there is an inherent difficulty arising from the union of the human and divine natures in the person of our Lord. It is a difficulty which must ever meet us in endeavouring to weigh His conduct, and estimate His motives and principles of action, according to the standard of mankind. Necessary as it is to keep constantly in view the perfect humanity of Christ, His liability to bodily and mental suffering, the marvellous fact of the Son of God being so truly the Son of Man that He was capable of being tempted in all points like as we are, and of the conflict produced by temptation being a real struggle for the mastery, still we cannot but perceive that the power of comprehending all the consequences of this perfect humanity is continually taken from us by the no less necessary faith in the divine being of our Lord.

Perhaps however this difficulty may be to some extent relieved in the case now before us by the consideration, that the real nature of Christ seems to have been a truth which Satan did not know. The formula with which he commences two of his temptations, "If Thou be the Son of God," would seem immediately to connect itself with the declaration from heaven which followed the baptism, "This is My beloved Son;" but the title Son of God was not a new one in the world; and though the baptism manifestly marked out Jesus of Nazareth as a special messenger of the Most High, and therefore as a most dangerous enemy to the empire of Satan, still it did not declare that truth, which during the whole of His life the disciples only partially understood, and which He Himself appears studiously to have concealed, namely, the truth upon which the Church is built, the essential deity of Christ. Hence the attacks made by Satan upon our Lord are to be regarded as made by one, who had only an imperfect knowledge of the nature of Him with whom he was dealing; just as afterwards the human adversaries of Christ opposed Him in partial ignorance, and even crucified Him not knowing what they

did; and we also, in considering the temptations and troubles which the Lord had to endure, may regard them purely as in relation to a man, without troubling ourselves with the problem which can never by possibility be solved, namely, how the union of the human and divine, in the person of Christ, at once made the suggestion of evil possible, and the victory over evil sure.

The history of the first temptation, in which Satan suggested to our Lord that He should satisfy His hunger by turning stones into bread, is usually and rightly taken as a lesson of trust in the Providence of God; but regarded from the point of view which we are now occupying, it teaches rather a lesson concerning the miraculous powers of Christ, and the conditions under which those powers were exercised. Regarding our Lord as "the Word made flesh," we have easily suggested to our minds the thought of creative energy limited in some way by human conditions; but if we endeavour to say in what manner limited, we fall upon that inherent difficulty of which I have already spoken. The view taken of Christ's miraculous powers by Satan was (as we might have expected) the coarsest

and lowest view that could be taken; to him the power of turning stones into bread (if such power existed) was an act to be performed on demand, as a proof of the title to be called the Son of God;—“If Thou be the Son of God,” do this; and for what end? not to encourage the doubting or to strengthen the weak or to manifest His glory or to prove His love, but to convince the father of lies. Whatever were the true meaning and conditions of Christ’s miraculous power, it is clear that Satan had quite misunderstood them; and it is important to perceive that he did so, because the misunderstanding has not been confined to him, as I shall take another opportunity of shewing more fully; but at present I wish you to look into the history of the Ministry of Christ, and observe how the challenge given by Satan to perform a miracle, and our Lord’s refusal to perform it, find their exact counterpart in the dealings of Christ with the unbelieving portion of His countrymen. The same thing would strike a careless reader of the Gospels which occurred to the mind of Satan; Satan finds in the wilderness one who has been declared to be the Son of God, and who is now wellnigh spent

with hunger—then why does He not rescue Himself by His power, and give a proof of His title? And so a reader of the Gospels might say—If Christ be that which He is supposed to have been, why does He not set Himself free and by the same deed declare His Godhead? But he who should reason thus would altogether mistake the character of Christ's life; and it is obvious to answer that the principle, upon which Christ's kingdom was to be founded, was not that of crushing all doubts by miracle, but that of melting all selfishness by love; and moreover, that in the Gospel history, though miracles are abundant, yet we never read (I think) of any man being converted by them, who was an adversary before; in that first miracle performed in Cana of Galilee,—which has a remarkable analogy with that proposed by Satan in the wilderness, the one as the other being a work of transubstantiation,—in that first miracle we have the very significant remark made by S. John, that He “manifested forth His glory, and *His disciples* believed on Him;” yes, *His disciples*, those who had already sat at His feet as a teacher, and given themselves up to His guidance, and so had qualified

themselves for the higher knowledge of His glory which His miraculous deeds conveyed. If we look through the whole Gospel history, we shall ever see this condition of miraculous operation coming into view; no character can stand more removed than that of Jesus Christ, from that of the mere wizard or wonder-worker, which the apocryphal Gospels so painfully attribute to Him, and which writers in our own times have not always repudiated as indignantly as they ought. With Him a miracle is the reward, and in some sense the product, of faith,—not a mere proof of divinity producible on demand before every scoffer,—not a deed to be performed to satisfy the curiosity of Herod,—not a means of supplying the wants and alleviating the ills, which humanity had brought upon Himself,—not any of these, but something much higher—I cannot define it; like all works of the Spirit, we cannot say whence it cometh or whither it goeth; but this we may say, and it is a point which the history of the temptation in the wilderness and of our Lord's ministry alike illustrate, namely, that the moral state of the persons by whom the miracle is to be witnessed is apparently an essential condition of the

miracle being performed. Many instances in the Gospel support what I have said ; but I will refer you to one passage especially, because it contains in itself the whole substance of the doctrine which I am endeavouring to enforce ; we read that upon one occasion, “ Christ *could* do no mighty works ;” this is S. Mark’s account, and the words are very emphatic : S. Matthew, in the parallel passage, tells us that “ He *did* not many mighty works because of their unbelief ;” but I think there is no reason why we should not go beyond S. Matthew’s “ *did* not,” and admit in its full force S. Mark’s “ *could* not ;” the unbelief of His countrymen was the cause ; they despised Him because He was a carpenter’s son ; and thus they deprived Him of the power of manifesting forth His glory. And so, if we turn back for a moment to the history of the temptation in the wilderness, may it not be true that Christ not only *would* not, but *could* not perform the work which Satan required ? If the presence of His unbelieving countrymen had such an effect, that He *could* not work a miracle before them, what wonder if His powers should be paralyzed by the presence of the great infidel himself ?

The fact is, that it is altogether a mistake to regard Christ chiefly as a worker of miracles ; the character which is deduced in Scripture from the Gospel history is not that of one who did wonders, so much as that of one who “went about doing good ;” it is the attitude of mind adopted by Satan, and therefore to be eschewed by men, which would lead, on a first acquaintance with Christ, to the challenge to perform a miracle in proof of His claim to our allegiance ; and as the turning of stones into bread in the wilderness would manifestly have had no good effect in disarming the opposition of the kingdom of darkness, so we may feel sure, both from reason and experience, that no miracle, however wonderful, will change the heart of those who love darkness rather than light. God forbid that I should undervalue the miracles of Christ, or should seem to favour the views of those who would explain them away, or resolve them into fables ; the life of Christ was indeed miraculous, as we might have expected that the life of the Son of God would be ; but it was one in which miracles were more than wonders, and one of which He Himself may be said to have given the best description,

when, after detailing to the disciples of John all the works of mercy by which His entrance into His kingdom had been marked, He did not conclude the catalogue with that miracle, which of all others seems most astounding to human thought, namely, the raising of the dead, but reserved this as the climax of His wonderful works, that the Gospel was preached to the poor.

What I would say then concerning the first temptation, and our Lord's conduct under it is this, that if we study Satan's notion of miracles regarded as evidences of Christianity we shall be able to understand much, both of the conditions under which Christ performed, and those under which He refused to perform miracles during His ministry upon earth; and conversely, the examination of His life may suggest to us, that the temptation in the wilderness was but a rehearsal (as it were) of the whole subsequent drama of unbelief. The second temptation (the second, at least, according to the order given by S. Matthew) seems to be susceptible of the same kind of treatment. In this Satan would have Christ to cast Himself down from the temple, in order that angels may bear him up, and verify

God's promises towards Him ; and we may rightly see in the Lord's refusal to comply with the suggestion a condemnation of the sin of presumption, a lesson that God's promises of protection are limited by the condition, that His servants are found in the path of duty ; but we may also gain a light as to the manner in which miraculous interposition was to enter into the ministry of Christ. Here, as in the first temptation, Satan demands a miracle ; " If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down,"—this is to be the evidence of His title, the ground of His claim to human allegiance : the distinction between the two cases is, that in the one Satan calls for a personal exercise of power, in the other for a miraculous interposition of the Father on behalf of His well-beloved Son. And if, according to the plan which I have laid down, we look for a parallel to this second attack of Satan in the actual life of Christ, we shall have no difficulty in finding several ; that frequent demand for a sign from heaven, of which we read in the Gospels, was but the expression of the same view of Christ's kingdom which Satan had advanced. According to this notion, the Kingdom of Heaven was not to be, as Christ said that

it should be, a tree developed from the smallest of seeds, and watered by the rains of heaven, and growing with a gradual growth, but it was to be the forced creation of a not only *supernatural*, but altogether *unnatural* power. And the reason why this kind of miraculous agency was denied by the good providence of God is probably analogous to that which forbade Christ from performing mighty works, and may be seen either by looking to the history of Christ in the wilderness, or to analogous passages in the history of His life afterwards. As for the former, we may well ask what could have been the moral result if Christ *had* performed the act which Satan suggested, and if the angels *had* borne Him up in their arms? Supposing this compliance possible, what would have happened? would Satan have been any the less the enemy of God than before? would he have been convinced? would he have said, My Lord and my God? We know enough of Satan to say that this could never have been; Satan must have been Satan still; and whatever might have been the results, the advancement of the kingdom of Christ could not by possibility have been one. But turn for a moment from Christ

in the wilderness to Christ upon the cross; here we have a notable instance of men requiring a sign: we read that those who passed by wagged their heads and bade Him come down; they too made His descent to be a test of His title to be called King, and they promised their own adherence if Christ would only give them such a test of His royalty; but this sign might not be given; it was neither right nor possible, that Christ's kingdom should be advanced thus; the spirit which demanded the sign was not the spirit either of faith or hope or charity, and therefore it could not have been converted even by a sign from heaven. And this apparent weakness of Christ becomes the more striking, and is brought into more direct connexion with the temptation in the wilderness, if we remember that when Christ forbade His apostles in the garden to attempt His rescue, He Himself referred to the angelic hosts, and declared that a prayer to His Father would speedily bring a legion to His aid; so that Satan's quotation of Scripture was in one sense a true one, the angels who could bear Him up in their arms were indeed ready at His summons; but Christ would rather experience the full pain of

being forsaken by His Father, and being made the taunt of men, than invoke an aid, which, so far from forwarding His kingdom, would have been the direct means of extinguishing it. And if ever the thought should cross our minds, that some magnificent sign from heaven might have given a very different turn and character to the ministry of Christ, and shamed the people into an acknowledgment of His claims, and established His kingdom at once upon a foundation which could never afterwards be moved, let us dispel the illusion by remembering, that however the demand for signs from heaven and the expectation of great fruits from them may be disguised, yet the whole truth may be seen exhibited in the history of Satan's demand in the wilderness ; it is emphatically Satan's mode of dealing with Christ ; and as Satan never intended to have been, and never could have been, convinced by the sign which he demanded, so could no heavenly result have followed, if Christ had endeavoured, as some of His countrymen desired, to build His kingdom upon the like foundation. No—but Christ did declare upon one occasion upon what His kingdom should be built ; Simon Peter once, in answer to the question,

“Whom say ye that I am?” replied, “The Christ of God,” and upon this faith, which the Lord declared to have been revealed from heaven, He said that He would build His Church; and because this foundation was laid deep in the heart and mind of men, and did not depend upon the mere wonder produced by a sign from heaven, therefore it was declared by Christ to be one against which the gates of hell should not prevail. “If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down,”—so speaks the tempter, so in like manner spake those who reviled Him on the cross: “Thou art the Christ of God,”—so spake S. Peter, and so throughout all ages speak the members of Christ’s holy catholic Church.

If we required proof, in addition to the reason of the thing, that the kingdom of Christ could never have been established by a sign from heaven, and that the demand for a sign was the mark of an evil generation, we might notice that the demand of Satan was itself suggested by a sign affirming that very truth which he professed a desire to see proved; or we might remember, that when upon one occasion a voice came to the ears of the disciples from above, the people who stood by said

that it thundered; or we might observe, that the most marvellous sign ever given, namely, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, had little effect in softening down opposition to His doctrine. But I must content myself with what has been already said, in order that I may pass on to the third temptation, and examine it upon the same principles as have been applied to the preceding two. And here I remark, that Satan no longer makes a demand for evidences; he assumes the attitude of one apparently convinced of the royalty of Christ; the question only remains upon what terms Christ shall enter upon His kingdom, what terms He shall make with *him*, who, whether he were overstating his own greatness or not, was certainly not altogether beyond the mark in his claims, being styled by Christ Himself “the Prince of this world.” Satan would give up his dominion, if Christ would do homage for it to himself; but it is manifest that a dominion held upon such a tenure would virtually leave Satan king; and we may perhaps be disposed to say that the offer was so utterly gross and detestable that it required little virtue to reject it; we shall however under-

stand the temptation better and perceive that there was deep meaning in Satan's proposal, if we look at it as interpreted in the life of Christ: for there we perceive, that the great temptation, to which, as a man, He was exposed, was that of establishing His kingdom upon the principles of this world; His countrymen, like Satan in the wilderness, were willing that the kingdoms of the world should be His, provided only He stood forward as an earthly Messiah; the point which Christ endeavoured to explain to the people, and which they could not understand, was that He had a real kingdom to found, and yet that the kingdom was not of this world. Now in order to understand the real pressure of Satan's temptation, imagine Christ to have been such as Satan probably believed Him to be, a man having a mission from God, but a man still, one sent to do a great work, yet liable to human weakness, and capable of being swayed by the ordinary motives which sway mankind; imagine Him to be, like many other great men, conscious of His powers, full of the persuasion that He is born to command, knowing that He has only to erect His standard in order that crowds should flock to it; and then you

will perceive what an opportunity Satan would have of pressing upon Him, that there was a more glorious course open than that which He seemed prepared to choose, a more certain means of becoming king, a better crown than the crown of thorns, a more exalted throne than the cross. The only difference between the actual experience of Christ and that of a human messenger from God, situated so as I have supposed, would be this, that Christ would at once indignantly reject the suggestion of evil; but what might be the amount of pain, which the effort would cost, is one of the mysteries which we can by no means explain: yet this we may certainly say, that it was not without an effort that Satan was overthrown; neither was it without constant communion with God, that Christ maintained, amid the temptations to found a kingdom upon lower principles, that perfect consistency of purpose which we notice throughout all His ministry. For this is to be remembered, that the choice of a spiritual kingdom was not one which could be made without a struggle; the kingdom was one which must be founded in such an utter abnegation of self, and a submission to such suffer-

ings, as might well make the human nature of Christ tremble in making the choice. And perhaps this point will come out more clearly by referring to another passage in the Lord's life; there was a subsequent occasion when Satan renewed his attack in a somewhat altered form; S. Luke tells us that the devil departed from Him "for a season," and we may probably refer the return here implied to the scene of agony, to which Christ Himself seems to have pointed, when He said, "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." Let us then for a moment look at Christ in Gethsemane, and see how the one picture illustrates the other; Satan had now, if we may so speak, learned the character of Christ better; there is no attempt to dazzle the eyes with the glitter of the kingdoms of this world; the suggestion is one full of respect, like that once made by S. Peter, and for which he received so severe a rebuke; the suggestion is, that the price of the kingdom is too heavy to be paid,—if Christ be the Son of God, why should the cross and passion be the condition of His taking possession of the throne? the temptation was evidently one hard to be overcome,—flesh

and blood would give strength and support to the suggestion,—Christ wrestles with the enemy in an agony, prayer gives Him the victory, and He is ready to be made king through sufferings.

I conceive therefore, that this third temptation of Christ may be regarded, as bringing before us in one view a lifelong struggle which the Lord had to endure. Whether we look to the readiness of the people under the peculiar circumstances of those times to catch at any hope of a successful leader, or to the misapprehensions of the disciples as seen in the suggestion of S. Peter, or to the natural shrinking from the cross and shame, or to the last awful conflict in the garden, we see a constant combination of influences at work, tending to make Christ swerve from His purpose of founding a kingdom of God amongst mankind. You may say that the divine nature of Christ rendered such a swerving impossible; so it may have been,—thanks to God that it was so,—but that does not prevent the influences from existing, nor prove that the Lord did not undergo a severe struggle in carrying out His work; it was as a man that Christ fasted in the wilderness, as a man that He

fought with Satan, as a man that he overcame; Satan challenged Christ to prove Himself to be the Son of God, but the Lord ever proclaimed Himself to be the Son of Man; and this latter title it is, which we must bear in mind if we would appreciate the mysteries of the life of Christ; this it is especially to which we must look when we contemplate Christ in the wilderness, and when we regard His struggle there as a picture of His sorrowful ministry amongst men. This too, I may add, is the side of His nature which is chiefly marked by the last circumstance of the sojourn in the wilderness. "The angels ministered unto Him,"—those blessed spirits, whose office it is to minister to men, came and ministered to Him, because He too was a man; Satan departed for a season, and then the angels came to support the Lord in His weakness.

And now, Christian brethren, I must commend the further consideration of this subject to your own meditations, requesting you to receive what I have said as hints of a mode of regarding a mysterious passage in the life of Christ, which deserves minute attention. If it be thought that I have not redeemed the pledge which I gave, that I would

avoid points of merely speculative interest and employ myself with matters bearing upon great questions of Christian practice, I would say, that although there are other ways in which the conflict of our Lord with Satan may be brought into more immediate connection with our own lives, (as I hope hereafter especially to recognize and enforce,) still it would be a mistake to suppose that the mode of treatment adopted to-day is one far removed from practical application to ourselves. For what have I done but this, namely, endeavoured to shew that the conflict of Christ in the wilderness was no singular isolated portion of the Lord's life, but that it represents to us as in a picture one view of the whole ministry of our Lord? And if, by contemplating Christ in the wilderness, we have been led to see the difficulties which beset His life,—the influences which tended to make Him swerve from the high purposes for which He was sent,—the struggle which it was necessary for Him to make, in order that denying Himself, crucifying His flesh, accepting the cup which His Father placed in His hand, He might be able without a murmur, though not without many a sigh, to do His Father's will,—

then have we not been learning the best lesson that possibly we can learn, as to our own condition in the world, the difficulties which lie in our way, the effort required from us in order that we too may do the will of God? The life of Christ is too nearly bound up with our own, to allow of our reverently contemplating Him in any part of His sojourn upon earth without receiving a blessing; and especially such portions of it as exhibit Him in conflict with the great enemy, and carrying on His Father's work in despite of temptations, may well suggest to us, that we have the same kind of work in hand and must carry on the work in the same way.

And there is another lesson which we may learn from the subject discussed to-day, and which seems to me to be of pressing importance to the young men of this generation. The great question of the possibility of putting sincere and simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is one which must continually come before the minds of men, and especially of young men, in times like our own; if we were to believe some of the books which are written in these days, we should conclude that the ages of

faith were past, and that the life of men was henceforth to be supported upon science and criticism. Far be it from me to depreciate the advantages to be gained from the growth of human knowledge; it is contrary to every deep conviction of my mind to indulge the thought, that He, who came to bear witness to the truth and who declared Himself to be a king in virtue of this His mission, can ever be served by neglect of those powers which God has given to His creatures for the discovery and establishment of truth; but it is ever to be remembered, that truth may be sought in the wrong way, and that in moral questions there may be disqualifications, which may darken the brightest intellect, and may hide from the wise and prudent knowledge which is revealed to babes. And I bring this before you now, because we have a good example of an investigation into the claims of Jesus of Nazareth not leading to faith, both in the history of His temptation in the wilderness and also in the history of His ministry. In the former case we have Satan putting His pretensions to a test, and lo! the test fails; in the latter we have men, professing to represent the science and criticism of their time,

re-echoing unconsciously the challenge which the devil had given. It seems to me that the very fact, of the undesigned coincidence of the views of the scribes and doctors of the law with those views which Satan had already patented as his own, may rightly be taken by us for a hint, that there may be modes of treating the claims of Christ, which learned men may defend, and which yet may have a very evil root, and therefore produce very evil consequences. And though I am manifestly brought by these remarks to the threshold of a question which cannot be now discussed, yet this I may say in general,—whatever you do, do *not* follow the example of Satan and of the Jews in their mode of treating the claims of Christ; do *not* assume an attitude, which upon the hypothesis of Christ's godhead no creature has a right to assume, and say, If Thou be the Son of God, do this or do that! but rather study the life of Christ, so as you actually find it, and see what it teaches you; see whether the explanation of all its difficulties and the solution of all its anomalies may not be found in the humble admission of that great mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh: and remember that

whatever science and criticism may have done,—and doubtless our obligations to both are incalculable, and it is the most foolish thing that a man can do to depreciate either the one or the other,—yet the Apostles' Creed stands precisely where it ever did, and it is possible for men of the deepest knowledge to repeat that Creed in unison with the simplest brother of Christ, and to bow the head with equal devotion as he repeats the words, "I believe in Jesus Christ."

Lastly, I would say, with reference to the practical character of the subject which I have brought before you to-day, that if the contemplation of Christ fasting in the wilderness, and there, in the extremity of human weakness, doing battle with the enemy of mankind, and the thought that this scene of trial was only a deep shadow cast beforehand by His life of trouble, and the remembrance that this humiliation of God's eternal Son was for us men and for our salvation—if *this* does not move us to zeal in our warfare against sin, by what considerations are we likely to be moved? The bearing of the history upon our every-day life is however a part of the subject which will come before us

more fully hereafter; at present I will only say this,—Let him who feels the power of his spiritual enemies, who knows that they ought to be resisted, and fears to be overcome by them,—let him think of Christ in the wilderness, as an example both of temptation and of victory, as a lesson of resistance to the devil, and a pledge that the devil may be overcome.

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SERMON II.

S. MARK i. 12, 13.

“And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.

And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him.”

IN my last sermon I regarded the history of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness with especial reference to the history of His personal ministry. I considered that a very real parallel might be drawn, between the view which Satan took of the work which He came to perform, and the view which was taken of the same by the faithless and perverse generation to whom the Gospel was first preached; and I thought it worth while to treat the subject from this point of view, being well convinced, that the experience of Christ in the wilderness and the experience of Christ in the world would mutually

illustrate each other, and could not fail to teach us much concerning Him which it would be profitable for us to know.

To-day I propose to go beyond the personal ministry of our Lord, and to consider the story of His temptation with reference to the light which it throws upon the right method of propagating His Gospel, or of building up His Church. And if there be, as I have supposed, a more than fanciful analogy between the history of Christ in the wilderness, and the history of Christ ministering among men,—if the misconceptions which the people of those days formed of Him and His work, and the manner in which they desired to test His claims, have a near resemblance to the misconceptions and proposed tests of which we read in the history of the temptation, and that for a very good reason, namely, that they came from the same source,—then we shall not be surprised, if we find in the same history a prophecy upon a still larger scale of the opposition made to the spread of the Gospel, and to the acknowledgement of Christ as King. In fact, we shall not be surprised, if we find in the opposition which Satan made at the very outset to the establishment of the

kingdom of God, an epitome of that ever-continued and too successful opposition, which has been made in all periods of history to the spread and prosperity of the same kingdom. As the temptation and fall of the first Adam represent to us in a wonderful manner the history of all the evil that has been in the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," so we might expect that the temptation and victory of the second Adam would represent as faithfully a happier phase of man's spiritual history, and shew us how by resisting the devil the servants of Christ have been taught to overcome. And indeed the story of Christ's victory does tell us of much advantage gained over the adversary, by those who have worn His armour, and resisted the enemy upon His principles ; all the victories which have been gained over Satan by the power of Christ's Gospel, whether in the purifying of the world at large, or in the production of those noble imitations of their Master, which we find in Christians of all ages of the Church, may be said to have been prefigured and prepared by the first great victory of Him who vanquished Satan in the wilderness. But it is a sorrowful reflection, that the

victory of the second Adam would seem to be by no means so complete a prophecy of the triumph of the human race, as the fall of the first Adam has proved to be of its submission to the powers of evil; the prophecy is complete in both cases so far as the attack of the enemy is concerned, but when we consider how the enemy has been resisted, we find too frequently cause to grieve, that the cowardly yielding to temptation has been copied from the first Adam, and the example of resistance which was set by the second forgotten as though it had never been.

Regarding then the history of our Lord in the wilderness, as intended to teach us by a parable that which ought to be the history of His Church in its combat with the powers of evil, I may remark in general, before speaking of the specific temptations, that to be opposed by the powers of darkness is no mere accident in the history of the Church. When Jesus had been baptized, and consigned from heaven as the beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased, He was led up immediately by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil,—*led by the Spirit*,—it was no accidental meeting, but as necessary a

portion of the work, to which He was anointed, as the anointing itself. That combat in the wilderness was the first step in establishing the kingdom of God amongst men, and was the type of all other steps taken by Him, whose coming into the world was the manifestation of the Son of God for the destruction of the works of the devil: the kingdom which Christ came to found could not be allowed to rest upon any composition with him, who gloried in being the prince of this world; Christ came to bear witness to the Truth, Satan is the father of lies; Christ is emphatically "the Light of the world," Satan is no less emphatically "the power of darkness;" and hence there could be no peace between the one king and the other, Christ could not enter into His kingdom unless Satan were first cast out. And here we have a true picture of the condition of Christ's Church in the world throughout all ages; if peace be the blessing which Christ left as a legacy to His Church within itself, war is no less His legacy as regards the kingdom of Satan without; the policy of the Church must be ever an aggressive one, no extent of territory is large enough for her so long as more territory remains to be conquered; the heathen

are given to Christ for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession; and as Christ completed His combat in the wilderness by bidding Satan depart, and entirely banishing the enemy from His presence, so can the servants of Christ never consider that the work of their Master has been completely done, until the devil and all his works have been utterly demolished and destroyed.

The life of the Church then is in its very nature one of conflict. Christ declared the character of it when He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace upon earth: I am not come to send peace, but a sword;" S. Paul alluded to the same, when he said, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;" we too bear our witness to the same, when we pray for the Church militant here on earth, and when we mark each infant with the sign of the cross, in token that he shall not be ashamed to fight under Christ's banner. And I may add, that as the leading of Christ by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan points out to us the true and normal condition of His Church on earth, namely, that of a Church militant against the powers of sin,

so if we pass for a moment to the close of the history, and contemplate the angels ministering to Christ, supporting Him in His weakness, preparing Him for the painful struggle of which this was but the first battle, we may learn that the Church of Christ is equally the object of heavenly guardianship; that the progress of Christ's kingdom, whether in the world at large or in the little world of each human heart, is watched by ministering spirits; and that while there is joy over each victory gained, so is there mourning in the courts of heaven when Satan gains an advantage over the kingdom of Christ through the weakness or wilfulness of His people.

And now, having regard to the three distinct attacks which Satan made upon Christ in the wilderness, we may learn from them three as distinct lessons concerning the propagation of Christ's Gospel in the world.

First, as it seems to me, we learn that the Gospel was not to be established by an appeal to the miraculous powers of those who preached it. I do not say that none of the early preachers of the Gospel were endowed with miraculous powers, for

the book of the Acts of the Apostles asserts the contrary; nor do I deny that, in certain instances, a miracle might be of great service in exciting attention, as for example, the healing of the lame man by Peter and John evidently produced a favourable movement in the people; but still the power of working miracles was never used by the Apostles as the prime argument to convince mankind, that they had a right to claim their allegiance as ambassadors for Jesus Christ. Under what conditions the Apostles availed themselves of the powers which Christ gave them, what was the extent of those powers, and whether they remained with the Church after the time of the Apostles, and if so, how soon they were withdrawn—these are questions of considerable difficulty; they require very careful handling, and they deserve to be patiently investigated; but they do not come within the scope of my present argument: for as the refusal of our Lord to do a miracle at Satan's bidding did not prove that the performance of miracles would form no part of His ministry, but only that they would be performed under conditions which Satan could not appreciate, so also in applying the history

of the temptation to the illustration of that of the Church, we may not draw the conclusion that miracles would be unknown; but we may perhaps draw the conclusion, that a miraculous agency on the part of the ministers of the Gospel was not to be deemed, as sometimes it has been deemed, the chief sign and token of the presence of the Spirit in the Church.

Secondly, we may learn that as personal miraculous agency on the part of the Apostles and their successors was not to be the chief engine for the propagation of the Gospel, so also its success was not to depend upon signs from heaven, or any præternatural influence upon the ordinary course of events. It is clear that this was a view of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, which was ill-received by the men of His own time, and which is not altogether agreeable to some of the prejudices of the human mind; and it is very remarkable, especially when we consider how frequently the Lord performed mighty works Himself, and how He armed His Apostles with powers like His own, to observe how carefully and frequently the Lord warned His disciples against the notion, that His

kingdom would be propagated in the world by any other principle than that of its internal, irresistible power of growth; the mustard seed was its true type, its growth what we call natural, but in fact the deepest of mysteries, and the mightiest of miracles; and they who said, "Lo here, or Lo there," looking for a sign from heaven, were not to be followed, because the kingdom of God was within. Now I do not say that no sign from heaven was ever given in testimony of the faith; I offer no opinion upon the heavenly vision of Constantine, nor deny the miraculous character of the agency which forbade the rebuilding of the temple; these things and the like may have been, even as in the ministry of Christ, though He Himself refused signs from heaven, yet at His crucifixion the Sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, and the bodies of saints raised: there is no principle of our religion, so far as I am able to perceive, either protestant or otherwise, which compels us to deny in the teeth of good evidence the possible occurrence of events of a kind different from ordinary; but I think that we are bound by every principle of the religion which Christ taught, and every indication

which we have of the will of God, to say that the propagation of the Gospel does not ultimately depend upon signs from heaven, but upon its fitness to meet the spiritual wants of men, and the appeal which it consequently makes at once to their highest reason and to their deepest feelings. It is in fact a contradiction to suppose, that the good tidings of the birth of Him, whose advent gave glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will amongst men, the message of love to the spirit of man from Him who made that spirit, could be dependent upon signs from without to force it upon the belief of mankind.

But thirdly, we learn from the history of the temptation, that the propagation of the Gospel was not to take place by doing homage to the powers of this world. This principle, when stated in terms, appears too plain to require comment; and when we see the opposite principle suggested by Satan, in his offer to give up the world to Christ, if only Christ would worship him, we marvel that so monstrous a bargain should have been proposed; like many other acts of rebellion, it seems almost impossible, when looked at coolly and dispassionately; but like them also it is not so difficult in commission as

from its appearance it might seem to be; and indeed I think that we cannot rightly estimate the subtilty of this third temptation, unless we regard it as it has been illustrated and interpreted in the manner in which I am now considering it. Looked upon as a personal attack upon Christ, it may possibly be regarded as too transparent a temptation to have had any chance of success; but looked upon as a prophecy of the kind of attack which Satan would make in all ages against the Church, and as a solemn protest against the danger of propagating the Gospel by adherence to the principles of worldly policy and by stooping to do homage to worldly power, the temptation may well be regarded as one of the most instructive lessons ever given to the Church, and as one to the neglect of which more evil is due than to all other causes besides.

Now it would be scarcely reverent towards the Apostles of our Lord, to undertake to shew, that they did not propagate His Gospel by any of those methods, which were proved to be spurious by the Temptation in the wilderness; but it will be right to remind you, on the other hand, of the method

according to which they actually did perform their work. Emphatically they preached Christ; not any peculiar doctrines about Him, some held by Paul, and some by Apollos, and some by Cephas, but Christ Himself; they held Him up both to Jew and Gentile, as He is declared in that Creed which bears their name, the King and Saviour of mankind; and when they testified, as they uniformly did, that He was risen from the dead, they did not lean upon a miracle in proof of doctrine, for they knew that of all parts of their teaching this was the one most likely to make men doubt; but they told it as a necessary part of the story, and were ready to die in witness of it, because they knew it to be true. Indeed so far from holding up the resurrection as a miracle, in the sense of being a breach of the course of nature in witness of a doctrine, we may rather say that they regarded their risen Lord as having declared the true course of nature, and for the first time exhibited to human eyes the true life of redeemed man. S. Peter, S. Paul, and S. John, the three great witnesses of the character of Apostolic teaching, in whatever other things they may differ, all agree in this. If

we listen to S. Peter upon the great day of Pentecost we find the burden of his sermon to be this, that Jesus of Nazareth whom his hearers all knew as one approved by miracles and wonders and signs, and yet as crucified and slain, had by God's power been raised from the dead and made both Lord and Christ. If we take S. Paul as a teacher, we have a doctrine ever consistent with itself and consistent too with S. Peter's Pentecostal sermon, of which such words as these may be regarded as the sample and type: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And lastly, the teaching of S. John, peculiar as it is in manner and style to himself, bearing the marks of the mind of one who was permitted to hold converse with Christ in His humiliation and by vision to see Christ in His glory, does yet, like that of S. Peter and S. Paul, rest upon the preaching of Christ as the Lord and Saviour of men—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our

hands have handled, of the Word of life, *that* declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." This I say then is the characteristic of Apostolic teaching, that it was emphatically a preaching of Christ, of Christ crucified and Christ risen again; and this may be safely maintained to have been the right way of teaching and of propagating the Gospel, not only because it was the way of those who received instruction from Christ Himself, but because upon the supposition of Christ really being that which He pretended to be, our hearts and consciences and our reason too, cannot but attest, that this is the way in which His claims ought to be placed before men. When we hear it suggested that the Apostles had a miraculous story to refer to, and miraculous powers at their command wherewith to back that story, and that this is the reason why their preaching was so successful and why modern attempts to propagate the Gospel have been comparatively abortive, we are bound to reply, not only that the Apostles as a matter of fact did not make it their practice to dwell upon arguments from miracles and signs from heaven, but that if they had they would have thrown the greatest

impediment possible in the way of an intelligent reception of their Gospel; for they would appear by so doing to have conceded the point of the Gospel being good news for men; they would seem to have admitted that they did not announce the coming of the rightful King, but that they were the ministers of an usurper, whose yoke they would fix upon men's necks by force of miracle, because they could rest his claims upon no better ground. And if the success of the Apostles had been due to miracles, and we of these latter days had been blessed with no such arguments, how could we have resisted the conviction, that God's arm was shortened, and that Christ had deserted His Church?

No—the Apostles preached Christ, so as He may be and ought to be preached in all times; they preached Him in all the series of His redemptive acts, and then they appealed to men as reasonable men to receive Him as their Lord, and to adopt His life as their example, and to live in the faith of seeing God through Him. And as they trusted to the reason and truth and inherent power of conviction belonging to their message, so they never truckled to human power; nor lowered their

high standard of faith and morals to please the world; nor adopted one style of teaching for the rich and another for the poor; nor in any one of the hundred possible ways made their Gospel the means of self-glorification; nor ever gained a new province for their Master's kingdom by doing homage for it to the Prince of this world.

Have their successors always followed their example? Have the temptations of the devil been always as ineffectual as in apostolic times? Has the Church of Christ in all ages thrown off the suggestions of evil, with that same indignation and success, which marked the combat of Christ in the wilderness? Alas! it seems to me, that the principles of the propagation of the Lord's kingdom, which were implied by the temptations in the wilderness, are principles which have been most scandalously set at nought; and that in the contempt of them is to be discovered the source of nearly all the miseries of the Church, and of the triumphs of Satan over it. For, if we look upon the history of the Church, may we not say, that the evils which we have to deplore in it may be traced to these two great sources, Superstition and Worldliness? and may not these

be regarded as the two evils foreshadowed by the temptations of Christ,—the trifling with and misuse of the miraculous becoming that which we usually term superstition,—and worldliness being an intelligible term for the admission of the principles and maxims of the kingdoms of this world into the spiritual kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let us look at each of these points for a moment. And first with regard to superstition. I class under one name the love of the miraculous in those two forms, which Satan demanded as a test of Christ's character—the personal miracle, and the sign from Heaven; I do not know that superstition is the most correct term possible, but at least it is intelligible, and is perhaps the only word we have to express an undue love and dependence upon the miraculous, instead of dependence upon the truth and moral power of the Gospel. Of course, if it could be made to appear, that a constant præternatural manifestation of God's power in proof of certain doctrines was the method, according to which in His wisdom Truth was to be propagated, it might be wrong to describe a love of the miraculous as a fault; but the case is rather this, that

owing to a misapprehension of the real significance of Christ's miracles, and a morbid desire of exhibiting a divine sanction for that which ought to have approved itself to the minds of men in other ways, and a want of reverence for Truth as that which of all other things is the mark of Christ's kingdom, persons professing to preach Christ's Gospel have from very early times down to the present deserted the apostolical grounds of teaching, and under the pretence of doing God service allowed the fabulous to be mixed with the true. Thus it came to pass in early times, that false histories of Christ were sent into the world, which transformed the whole character of His life by making foul additions to His miracles. Thus it is, that we are unable to read the sneering account which Gibbon gives of the miraculous powers of the Church as one of the great causes to be assigned for its progress, without feeling that though the sneer be cruel, it is not altogether undeserved. When the historian tells us, that the history of the Church is one miraculous tissue woven from top to bottom without seam throughout, and that therefore it is hard to draw the line at which miracle ends and imposture

begins; and when he suggests to us a conclusion too painful for any disciple of Christ to contemplate, who does not feel, that if Satan was rebuffed in the wilderness, he has at least had his revenge? who does not feel, that the professed followers of Christ have fallen into the snare of which He Himself warned them, and injured the cause of truth by making it appear, that truth required the aid of miracles to prove that it was true? This same sin of the Church appears again in the manner, in which the spiritual presence of Christ in the commemoration of His death has been converted into a physical miracle, and a change of substance put in the place of a divine mystery; an illustration of my subject this, from which I would willingly have abstained, on the ground that jealousy for Catholic truth may easily be mistaken for an ignorant hatred of everything sanctioned by the Church of Rome; but I could not well pass it by, because it is remarkable that the miracle to which Satan would tempt Christ was a miracle of transubstantiation, and because I think it cannot be denied that of all injuries which have been done to the cause of truth, the unity of the Church, the spread of the Gospel, there is

scarcely one of equal magnitude with that, which has been produced by superstitions connected with the holy supper of the Lord.

And it is to be remarked, that the love of the miraculous, which so easily degenerates into superstition, and which affords the greatest temptation to the exercise of priestcraft and deceit, has by no means died out. Recent accounts of miracles performed by saints have been received with as much readiness as ever such accounts were ; and attempts have been made in this country to revive the credit of the mediæval miracles, with a zeal, which seems to indicate that the length of time in which they have been held in abeyance has given to their history a new relish and zest. And if we think that this love of the miraculous belongs to the Romish communion exclusively, we are clearly mistaken. The spasmodic effects following the preaching of Wesley and Whitfield were gladly recognized as a witness of the Spirit's operations ; there was the same eager recognition of a supernatural power in the case of the followers of Irving ; and above all, we have witnessed lately the almost inconceivable phenomenon of men, apparently in good faith and in

sound mind, pretending to receive revelations both from heaven and hell by asking questions of a lump of wood.

Perhaps, however, the advantages which Satan has obtained over the Church by an abuse of the love of the miraculous, have hardly been so great as those, which have accrued to him from the skilful application of the other kind of temptation with which he assaulted our Lord. When he found that Christ would not prove His greatness by a miracle or a sign, he shewed Him all the glories of the world, and then bid Him fall down in homage to himself. What can more grievously, because more truly, represent the history of the Church, with this difference only, namely, that one mode of attack has not been adopted because the other has failed, but that contrariwise the two have been carried on with equal success, and have mutually assisted each other? The kingdom of Christ was foreshadowed in the wilderness, and was declared by His own lips and by those of His Apostles, to be not of this world; it was the very mark and characteristic of it, that it was to be founded upon other principles, and was to flourish by the setting at nought of those, upon which

earthly kingdoms are based ; but the spirit of the world soon entered in,—dare we say *how* soon, when we remember that in the time of Christ there was a Judas who sold His Master for money, and that in the time of the Apostles there was a Simon who would purchase the gifts of the Holy Ghost ? I do not think we can say, that there is any particular period at which the evil commenced ; the fact is, that the evil exists in germ in the heart of man, and will come to maturity if maturity be possible. Doubtless there have been periods in the history of Christ's kingdom, which are more pleasing to contemplate than others, and we may probably trace considerable corruption and decay, or the opposite, in connexion with particular historical facts ; but the point upon which I would lay stress is this, that regarding the history of the Church from the beginning till now, and thankfully acknowledging the great things which she has done, recognizing even in her darkest periods distinct marks of the presence of Christ, and not doubting that the truth still remains in her, and is capable of shewing forth its living power, we are compelled to admit that there has been in all times a fearful forgetfulness of the fact,

that the very office and privilege and charter of the birthright of the Church of Christ is to bear testimony against the spirit of the world. Looking at one portion of the history, when the kings of the earth acknowledged the professed Head of the Church as their Lord, and when the corruptions of the Church were almost as remarkable as her influence in the government of the world, we might be disposed to say that the offer made to Christ had been accepted by His followers, and that all the kingdoms and the glory of them had been made over by the Prince of this world, on condition of doing homage for them to him. And indeed it is very striking to contemplate the tale of Christ's temptation as a dark foreshadowing of this dark page of history; and we may contemplate it thus with profit, if only we take good heed not to let our contemplation stop here,—not to think that the tale foreshadows the dark ages, but not in any degree those nearer to our own times,—not to assume that the spirit of the world belongs to Popery, and is exorcised from Protestantism,—not to fancy that the Church of Rome has forgotten the true principles of the kingdom of Christ, and that the same

principles have never been forgotten in our own reformed Church of England. It would be a very unpractical and a very false way of considering the subject, to look entirely away from ourselves, and lament that the progress of Christ's kingdom has been impeded (as doubtless it has been) by worldly influences, and forget to examine how far those influences have been effective in this country,—how far they have crippled the spiritual power of the Church,—how far they have assisted in breaking up the body of Christ into sects and parties,—how far they have been instrumental in producing the phenomenon of a mass of spiritual destitution, scarcely to be estimated and believed, in the midst of a country boasting all the while with almost Pharisaical self-complacency of its pure and reformed religion. If we were to consider the subject thus, we might easily strengthen ourselves in pride and prejudices ; but we should not be led to that one only result, which ought to be held in view by the student of history, whether Church or otherwise, namely, wisdom for the future, practical lessons for ourselves, warnings of those sins into which we too may very easily fall.

And, therefore, without adducing particulars to shew the precise manner in which Satan has gained advantage over the Church in this country, let me rather pass on to say a few words suggested to me by the thought, that I am speaking in a place, which ought to be one of the strongholds of truth and religion against the power and temptations of the evil one. Whether we have regard to the professed work of the members of our body, as men being trained for the investigation of Truth, or to the great design of our foundations and charters, or to the intended future occupation of the great number of our students, one cannot but feel that the question of the successful propagation of the Gospel depends very much upon the tone of thought, and religious feeling, prevalent in this University. If Satan can gain a victory here by temptations such as those which he offered in the wilderness, if he can delude the heads of those who are to be the champions of Christ's kingdom, or seduce and corrupt their hearts, then he has done more than can perhaps be effected by any other means to injure the cause of truth in this country, and to bring the people under his own dominion. And, therefore,

having reference to the present state of the conflict of the kingdom of Christ with the power of Satan, it may not be amiss that I should remind you of two or three points. Taking a broad view of the matter we may say, that the dangers of Christ's kingdom as typified in the wilderness and as exhibited in practice are twofold, intellectual and moral,—dangers from unbelief on one side, and from mere worldliness and selfishness on the other. And with regard to both it may be asserted, that the only true mode of propagating Christ's kingdom, so far as the preaching of the Church is concerned, consists in the plain and earnest preaching of Christ. In early times it was no new doctrine of philosophy, but the announcement of the birth, death and resurrection of one who could claim the homage of mankind, which enabled the Apostles to overcome equally the obstinate prejudices of Jews, and the learned opposition of Gentiles; in the first centuries it was the integrity of the Creed, for which the Church had earnestly to contend; in the darkest ages it was because the Church rested not upon any philosophical doctrines, but upon the rock of an historical personal Christ, that the corruptions of the world

could never entirely take from her all life and power ; it was by bringing into prominence the power of faith in Christ, that Luther moved the world ; and in our own country, whatever real reformation has taken place in religion, has been produced not by any remarkable discovery which has given to a new teacher a pre-eminence over his predecessors, but by a recurrence to the old truths which the Apostles' Creed contains. And though it is possible to make the phrase "preaching the Gospel" to mean rather the choosing out one or two favourite doctrines, and giving to them such prominence as virtually to falsify them, still we must not by this abuse of terms be driven away from the recognition of the great truth, that to preach the Gospel,—to declare that Jesus Christ of Nazareth came from heaven with a message of goodwill to men,—to preach Him as the medium through whom we can see the Father, and attain the knowledge of God,—to confess Him as being made unto us of God wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,—to teach men to glory in His cross, and imitate His example, and live in the faith of seeing Him as He is,—that as this was the commission of the Apostles, and the

means by which they worked miracles greater than those of Christ Himself, so is it the commission of Bishops and Priests in these days, and is the only means whereby they can hope to persuade men to live as becomes the servants of Christ.

But while I would give full weight to this side of the question, let me guard against a perversion into which we are liable to be betrayed. When it is affirmed, (and it cannot be too earnestly affirmed,) that to preach Christ is the great work of the Church and the great means of spiritual influence in the world, and when we consider that the whole text of the teaching of the Church may therefore be said to be contained in the Apostles' Creed, it is not unlikely that the conclusion may be drawn,—and sometimes it practically, if not avowedly, has been drawn,—that intellectual qualifications and sound learning are no part of that armour of God, with which the minister of Christ ought to be clothed. Now it is very true, that learning and intellectual pre-eminence will neither make a man a Christian nor enable him to make others such; and if we must have either men of a high intellectual stamp without earnestness, or earnest men without intel-

lectual qualifications, we cannot doubt about the choice; just as a brave man is better without armour than a coward armed to the teeth. But why suppose such an alternative? What is the end of such institutions as this University, but the harmonious union of sound learning and religious education? and to what nobler purpose can the man of most exalted intelligence apply his powers, than that of advancing the kingdom of truth, which Christ Himself has declared to be only a synonyme for His own? And I lay the more stress upon this point, because I think that at this time, and in the present condition of the minds of men throughout Europe, there is hardly any point of more pressing importance than this, namely, that the ministers of the Gospel should be men who are able to make their light shine, not merely by the purity of their lives, but by their general mental pre-eminence. If the nation were festering in a mere mass of worldliness and corruption, the case might be different; "Bring forth works meet for repentance," might then be a sufficient answer to give to those, who came to us for a reason of the faith that is in us; and a life like that of the Baptist might be the best

argument, with which to support the answer. But the state of things is different; the kingdom of Christ is threatened on the intellectual side; there is a widespread and unfathomed mass of speculative infidelity, besides the mere practical irreligion arising from the lusts of this world; literature is extensively circulated, attacking the faith of Christians, and some writers treat belief in Christ as a thing altogether gone by: how are we to meet this? nay not *we*—how are *you* to meet this, my young Christian brethren? for to meet it will be your work, and perchance the war will rage more hotly in your time, than it does now; you are bound to do *this*, you are bound as you value the treasure of the faith once committed to the saints, and committed in your generation to your charge, to take good care that the truth does not suffer by the general persuasion, that the clergy are not competent to grapple with the intellectual difficulties of their times; earthen vessels the ministers of Christ may be, as S. Paul confessed, still earthen vessels need not be empty, but may contain heavenly treasure; weak things of the world are they with which God confounds the mighty, but there is no

reason why weakness should be made weaker still by human ignorance, and by a want of zeal in applying our best energies to the development of our natural powers; and if the message of the Gospel be entitled according to the phraseology of the English version, "the foolishness of preaching," there is no reason why the ability and attainment of the clergy should be such, that scoffers should be able to account their preaching foolishness. And observe, that I am not laying stress merely upon the need of a good theological education in the ordinary sense of the term, however desirable that may be; I am rather wishing to impress upon you, that all your education here is, or ought, to be regarded as Theological; language, history, science, philosophy—all are to be so accounted, not only because of the habits of thought which intense study encourages, and the strengthening of the reasoning powers produced by exercise, but because it is only by an acquaintance with what has been done in these various branches of inquiry, that a clergyman can estimate the religious difficulties of his time, and understand how the truth may be defended. We in this place shall

not sympathize with any foolish fancies concerning the danger of the progress of knowledge ; but we cannot fail to perceive, that in every stream which leads towards the fountain of truth there is a strong countercurrent of error ; that a person may thus be in the channel of the stream and yet may be going the wrong way ; and that consequently it is the duty of those who are appointed to lead their brethren in the way of eternal life, to make themselves acquainted with the dangers, and able to point them out to the unwary. And if indeed that be true which S. Paul tells us, that Christ is emphatically “the power and the wisdom of God,” how can there be any study legitimately pursued, which does not lead to the knowledge of Christ ? how can language and history and science and philosophy be other than the true foundations of Theology, being as they essentially are the elements of the knowledge of God ? and how can we do otherwise than repudiate with scorn that notion with which we sometimes meet, namely, that there is no scope for first-rate talents, and no need for great intellectual acquirement, amongst those, whose highest privilege nevertheless themselves would gladly con-

fess to be this, that they are permitted to bind up the broken-hearted and to preach the Gospel to the poor?

Young Christian brethren, especially you who are hoping soon to be Priests in the Temple of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, consider, I pray you, the importance of arming yourselves at all points against the wiles of the devil. Let the course of study and training which you here undergo be accounted by you as a sacrifice, religiously made at the altar of God. Be ashamed of offering to God that which costs you nothing. Do not consider that your training for the ministry commences, when your training for the Senate-house has been completed; but rather consider that whatever fits you for the one does, so far as it goes, fit you for the other. Consider that your powers of intellect, and opportunities of becoming acquainted with the works of the great masters of thought, are gifts which are given you to profit withal, and gifts of which you must expect to render an account, when you are called upon to say how you have discharged your mission. Idleness and wilful ignorance are as truly of the devil as sensuality or profaneness, and

a college life misspent cannot but tend to evil, whatever a man's future course may be ; but he who misspends his time here, intending all the while to take upon him afterwards the cure of souls, is more than others guilty of wasting that which is not his own, doing an injustice to his brother, and weakening the cause of Christ.

And this leads me to say a word upon that other danger of the Church of which I have spoken, the danger arising from worldliness ;—leads me to it, because the misspending of time is not merely an intellectual waste, but is sure to have moral consequences. And therefore, as I have undertaken to urge upon you the need, especially in our own days, of a high intellectual and educational standard for the clergy, so I would also press upon you that the spirit of worldliness cannot be exorcised from the Church at large, unless it be manfully combated by those, whose office it is to teach, as Christ Himself taught, not only by word, but by example. I do not say that all depends upon the simple zeal and self-denying devotedness of the clergy ; I know that the peculiar connection of the Church of England with the temporal powers always renders her

liable, in opposition to the wishes of her most faithful children, to an infusion of worldly principles; that state patronage may be abused, and private patronage too; I know also that the extreme wealth and the ardent love of it, which belong to this country more than to almost any other, render the spirit of worldliness the spirit by which, of all others, the religion of the laity is most likely to be possessed; yet having regard to the peculiar character of this congregation, I may still lay principal stress upon the point, that one great protest against the spirit of the world must ever be the unworldly lives of the clergy. I do not however propose to dwell upon the point now, both because it is time that I should bring my discourse to a close, and because I may probably be led in the same direction by the subject which I have in view for next Sunday; this only I would say, that whatever you, my young Christian brethren, will be when you are in the ministry, that you are beginning to be now; your moral as well as your intellectual habits are being formed, and it is by earnest efforts now against the seductions and

temptations of the evil one, that you can best ensure that high praise, which Christ gave to His apostles when He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

SERMON III.

S. MARK i. 12, 13.

“And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.
And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him.”

IN the two sermons which I have already preached upon this text, I have regarded the history of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, as it illustrates, and is illustrated by, the tale of His own personal ministry upon earth, and the tale of the temptations and trials of His Church. I propose to-day to take an entirely different view of the subject, and to regard it in a light in which it will come home with singular weight and propriety to the greater portion of our Academic body. My purpose is to consider the retirement of the Lord into the wilderness, and the trials to which He was there submitted, as a

part of His personal preparation for the ministry upon which He was about to enter ; and to inquire what lessons may be learned, from the history so regarded, by those who in our own days are called to be ministers of Christ's Gospel to their brethren.

And in order that we may rightly make this use of the history, let me first point out that it involves no irreverence towards our blessed Lord, to regard His retirement and His temptation as in the truest sense a preparation for the ministry, which He was about to fulfil. Far from this, it would be to detract from the great doctrine of His perfect manhood, to suppose that in virtue of His divine power His works upon earth were begun, continued, and ended, in a manner totally different from that in which other men perform great spiritual deeds, namely, without counting the cost, without a conscious sacrifice of self, and without preparing for a conflict with evil. And certainly if we had seen in the life and conduct of Christ nothing but a picture of Messiah travelling in the greatness of His strength, crushing all foes without apparent effort, unconscious of difficulties, raised by His divine nature into a region far above all opposition to His will,

we should have missed that great truth, which is the ground of all our hopes, and the encouragement of all our efforts, that God for our sakes became very man. Indeed we cannot, in reading the Gospels, avoid being struck by the manner in which a number of facts are brought into prominence, shewing the degree of human labour and human weakness too with which Christ performed His work ; thus S. John, whose Gospel is so full of the Godhead of the Word made flesh, nevertheless takes care to tell us, that it was in weariness that Christ rested Himself upon the well, and that He did not withhold His tears when He stood by His friend's grave. And, therefore, though it be difficult to conceive, how any preparation should be necessary to the Lord, in order to fit Him for that ministry to which He was anointed before the foundation of the world, still it would be according to the analogy of His whole life, and a necessary consequence of the doctrine of His Manhood, that a preparation upon earth should be required for that work which He had upon earth to perform. And we have the less difficulty in regarding the retirement into the wilderness in this light, because we have other

records of preparation made by Christ for labours which He was about to undergo. Thus in the story of His being found in the temple in the midst of the Jewish doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, we find Him excusing His delay in Jerusalem on the ground that He was about His Father's business. So also before He chose His twelve apostles, He spent a night in prayer. So too we read that to retire to a mountain, or a solitary place, for solemn communion with God, was no occasional thing, but an integral portion of His life. And so above all, we find Him on the eve of the Passion wrestling in an agony, combating the suggestions of the Prince of this world, gaining strength to drink that cup whose bitterness he dreaded, by the same means and from the same source as are open to His brethren. Hence, therefore, when I read, that Jesus was designated at His baptism as "the beloved Son in whom God was well pleased," that He then was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and that there in true human weakness He fasted and hungered, and was submitted to foul temptations, and was comforted by angels when He had obtained the victory, and that after this mys-

terious retirement He went forth into the world, and began to preach the Gospel of His kingdom, I see no reason to doubt, that, taking our stand for the moment upon the human nature of Christ, we may regard the retirement into the wilderness as in organic connexion with the subsequent ministry; I cannot but feel persuaded, that Christ, as a man, looking forward to the labours which He had to undergo, counting the cost, making up His mind to the sacrifice, was as truly preparing Himself for the work of the ministry, as any one of you, Christian brethren, can prepare himself now in these days.

I need not tell you, that there is scarcely any question which is of deeper, more general, more thoroughly national importance, than the temper, and spirit, and purpose, and degree of earnestness, with which young men take upon themselves holy orders, and prepare themselves for the ministry which those orders imply. I say nothing of the tremendous personal responsibility which ordination involves, and of the wisdom of those words of S. James, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." I say nothing of the danger in which men place their own

souls, when they take upon themselves an office in which the honour of Christ and the well-being of their brethren are so intimately concerned, without having used all means in their power for ascertaining their fitness for the office, and having made all due preparation for the discharge of it. I do not now stop to ask, whether a thoughtless or unworthy intrusion into the priestly office be compatible—I will not say with the principles of religion and morality, but—with those of the commonest honesty. I omit at this present time all these and the like views, and deal with the question as one, in which not the personal interests of a few of us clergy are concerned, but the interests of the millions of laity; and regarded thus, I am sure that no question can be of deeper and more general concern, than that of the manner in which young men prepare themselves for the assumption of that office, which, however divines may differ concerning the limits of its powers and the reality of its priestly character, we all agree in describing as the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If then we can find in the history of our Lord traces of the manner, in which He Himself prepared for the work, how can we do better than

reverently mark His footsteps, and learn to tread in them? and how can I bring the history of Christ in the wilderness into more important practical connexion with the lives of such a congregation as this, than by endeavouring to gain from it lessons bearing the divine seal of His example, concerning the manner in which His disciples in all ages of the Church ought to contemplate the ministry and prepare themselves for fulfilling it?

Of course I am not pretending to deduce from the history a complete guide for candidates for holy orders. I have already, in a former sermon, taken occasion to enforce the great need, which seems to exist in these days, that the education of the clergy should be not only sound and religious, but also learned, and even scientific; no one can be more deeply impressed than myself with the truth, that it is a great necessity of this inquisitive and knowing generation, that the clergy as a body should be respected for their intellectual elevation, as well as revered for the purity of their lives, and the warmth of their zeal; I shall not be suspected therefore, in laying stress upon those lessons which may be learned from Christ in the wilderness, of

undervaluing that mental culture and training, which it would be the very madness of fanaticism to disregard. And indeed, if any one were disposed to stretch the interpretation of the history beyond its due limits, by arguing that Christ prepared Himself for His work by fasting and solitary prayer and not by books and study, and by drawing the conclusion which sometimes has practically been drawn, that we can safely put aside human learning, and make the strength of the Christian ministry to depend only upon zeal and the preparation of the heart, we might well refer to that incident of which I have already spoken, namely, Christ found in His boyhood in the midst of the doctors of the Law. But I may very well assume, that in this place of learned and scientific education, no one will be disposed to undervalue the preparation of books and study; and may therefore, without fear of being misinterpreted, lay as much stress as I am able upon that other kind of preparation for the Ministry, of which the history of Christ in the wilderness gives us the best and most wonderful example. And I would regard our Lord as teaching us by His own history, that in addition to the

preparation which may be gained from books, there is a preparation no less essential, which can be best acquired in solitude, in communion with our own hearts, in solemn converse with God, and in earnest conflict with the power of evil.

And here let me remind you, that Holy Scripture affords other instances, besides that of our Lord, in illustration of this truth. Thus you will remember, that Moses, though learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, having also a position of great influence and a persuasion moreover that he was intended to be the deliverer of Israel, nevertheless mistook the manner in which the work was to be accomplished, and learned in his banishment in the wilderness that wisdom which Egypt had not taught him. I forbear to dwell upon the parallel between the retirement of Moses for forty days before the promulgation of the Law, and that of Christ for the same number of days before the promulgation of the Gospel; because, although the parallel is doubtless a real one, and has been often noticed as such, still it is not so applicable to my present subject as the retirement from the land of Egypt before his mission to Pharaoh commenced.

I shall not however omit to refer to that other instance of retirement into the wilderness for forty days, which is commonly put in comparison with the retirement of Christ, I mean that of the prophet Elijah ; for although this discipline did not form a preparation for his ministry, but one of its central portions, still this may be asserted concerning it, that Elijah learned in a cave of the wilderness lessons which he had never learned in the schools of the prophets. And the mention of Elijah carries our minds on to his antitype in the Christian dispensation, who illustrates as it were by a kind of exaggeration, the point of which I am now speaking : S. John the Baptist did more than retire for a season, he made the wilderness his home ; there he remained until the day of his shewing unto Israel ; his food and raiment as wild as his dwelling-place ; no booklearning at all ; but that kind of preparation brought into fullest prominence, which was necessary to give force to his words, when he preached the doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins. And is it not remarkable, how the wild solitary life of S. John fitted him to preach before king Herod ? how he ventured upon applications of his great

doctrine, from which a more courtly chaplain might have abstained? and how ordinary rules were so set aside, that we should never hear of John trembling before Herod, but contrariwise should find it recorded that “ Herod feared John?”

All this is remarkable, and ought by all means to be remarked by us; not however because it points out to us how different are the ways of men in the Bible from what we witness in ordinary history, but just because these scriptural examples are such as may be naturally classed with an abundance of others drawn from more ordinary sources. It may be very true, that in a certain sense a knowledge of the world is useful to a clergyman; yet an instance like that of S. John will suggest to us, that solitude may sometimes give lessons which are needed in the courts of kings, and (what is more) may strengthen the nerves of a preacher to enable him to utter the same. And if we look to history we shall find, that those who have by their voice and by their writings most effectually moved their brethren to the thought of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, have been those, who, like S. John, have held themselves most removed

from ordinary worldly ways. The fact is, that in order to move the world, a man does not so much need to be familiar with its ways as to gain a point above them; he needs to hold companionship with Christ upon the high mountain, while Satan passes in review all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and utters those words, the more horrible because partly true, "All these are mine, and I give them to whomsoever I will;" a man who has the knowledge of the world, which this vision will give him, will find that he has a message to deliver to the world which will not fail to move it. And so it was, that the voice, which in these later days of Christian history asserted a power over mankind more influential, by the testimony both of friend and foe, than that of any other voice which the world has heard, was the voice of a monk. And so likewise it has been, that in the history of our own Church, the men who under God have been from time to time the means of lighting up the flame, which was being choked by the cares or pleasures of this world, or by the deceitfulness of riches, or by the lust of other things, have been those, who have fitted themselves for the work in

College rooms, and College Chapels, and College walks.

But now let me enter into a few particulars, and endeavour to exhibit some of those points, in which candidates for the ministry may gain assistance, from considering the preparation, which the Lord Himself was pleased to undergo.

And in the first place I would press upon you, that forasmuch as our Lord's life upon earth was essentially one of sacrifice, and as it may be stated without irreverence that He counted the cost, and determined to submit to it knowing how great the cost would be, we may rightly enforce this as a lesson to be studied by all those who would follow in His steps,—First count the cost ! You cannot but remember the pains, with which the Lord in the days of His flesh insisted upon this as the great lesson to be learned by all those, who wished to become His disciples. He ever represented His service as one which required sacrifice ; and would have men to perceive, that those who would be highest in His kingdom would be those, who in privation and suffering most resembled Himself. “If any man will come after me, let him deny

himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me,"—*that* may be said to contain the spirit of Christ's exhortations to men to follow Him, and of His warnings as to what His service would involve. And if we look for an illustration of His words to the lives of those who did undertake to propagate His Gospel, we shall find that there was good need of the caution which He gave. A man, who for the sake of Christ lived the life which the Apostles led, and who remained as they did, faithful to the end, may well be believed to have first counted the cost ; nor would any one question, that the same careful consideration of the cost of Apostleship would be necessary in our own days, if the Ministry of the Gospel now involved the same tribulation and persecution and distress, as it did in the days of S. Peter and S. Paul ; in fact, there are certain branches of the service of Christ in our own times, which confessedly do involve so much of sacrifice, in which there is so much of comfort to lose and so little of a worldly character to gain, that common prudence would suggest to a man to take heed what his conduct involves, before he pledges himself to such a work ; I refer to mis-

sions to the heathen, with the loss of the comforts of home and of civilized society, and the possible personal danger and certainty of personal suffering, which such missions involve. And if all the work of the Christian Ministry were of this kind, there would be very little occasion for saying much about counting the cost ; young men would do it carefully, without being advised ; the folly of undertaking a work, for the carrying on of which a man has no taste or natural fitness or earnestness arising from deep religious principle, would be too glaring not to be perceived by every one, who was considering what his occupation in life should be ; but the danger in a state of things such as that in which we live is this, that the assumption of holy orders,—or “going into the Church,” as it is sometimes most incorrectly and most unhappily called,—that the assumption of holy orders should be regarded as an easy simple matter, involving no sacrifice, no cost ; that the Ministry of Christ’s Word and Sacraments should be undertaken, without considering that it really is a Ministry ; that solemn vows should be incurred, merely for the sake of a family living, or for the sake of holding a fellowship, or because

“the Church” is a respectable profession, without due consideration of the work that ought to be done, in order to prevent those vows from rising up in the judgment. I do not by any means desire to give overstrained fanatical views of the priestly office; I do not say, that, even on the score of mere personal happiness, the priestly office conscientiously discharged may not have much more to give in the way of reward, than it can cause to be given up in the way of sacrifice; this is only in accordance with the picture which Christ Himself gave of His service, when, telling His disciples of the troubles they would incur for His sake, He told them at the same time, that there was no man who had left all for His sake, who should not receive manifold more in this present life and in the world to come life everlasting; and you will remember also, that although Christ spoke so unreservedly—so honestly, if I may venture with reverence to use the word—of the troubles which His service would involve, He nevertheless described Himself as the true rest of the weary and heavy-laden, and promised to those who would learn of Him that they should find His yoke easy and His burden light. Hence I by no means

wish to underrate the happiness which the Ministry of the Gospel affords, nor to exaggerate the sacrifice which the assumption of holy orders requires ; but I do say, that he who takes an otiose view of the labours and responsibilities of the Christian priesthood, and who is not prepared to make such sacrifices as an earnest and conscientious discharge of his high duties may require, had much better for his own sake, and for that of the souls for which Christ died, refrain from the office of the Ministry. It is beyond my purpose to enter into particulars concerning the sacrifice, which a man may be called upon to make ; I would rather take occasion to remark, that such particulars must be for each person a matter between God and his own soul, that it is in quiet retirement that such questions as are raised by the thought of following Christ can best be discussed and answered, and that he who has most conscientiously retired with Christ to the wilderness, there to contemplate the work before him, there to devote himself to God's service, there to count the cost of his tower, and see whether he have sufficient to finish it, will be most fitted to follow the example of Christ in

ministering to his brethren, and in preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

But again : the fact that our blessed Lord prepared Himself for His Ministry in retirement may well teach us, not only that it is good for us to contemplate quietly the greatness of the work of the Christian Ministry and to count the cost of fulfilling it, but also that there is a kind of knowledge most necessary for dealing rightly with the spiritual diseases of mankind, which we cannot get from books, but which we may obtain by communion with God and with our own hearts. Orthodoxy is not the only qualification for a clergyman ; doubtless it is a very necessary qualification, and the various Christian sects are probably more indebted to the Church than they are themselves aware, for the true standard of doctrine, which she maintains, and which influences for good even those who differ from her most ; still orthodoxy may practically be of a very sleepy kind, and it may be sometimes observed that sectarian teachers of no high mental qualifications are able to produce an effect upon the minds of men, which the teaching of the parish Church fails to produce. Now I do not say,

that it is thus proved, that the teaching of the Meeting-house is good and that of the parish Church bad ; I am quite aware, that strange doctrine may sometimes have a charm just because it is strange, and that quiet useful practical teaching may through the perverseness of the human heart be despised ; but still I think that we should do wisely, instead of looking exclusively to the presumption which leads unauthorized and ill-instructed persons to assume the office of teacher, to consider whether this lesson may not sometimes be learned, namely, that in order to preach the Gospel, and specially to preach the Gospel to the poor, a knowledge is necessary, which all the learning of a University cannot give, and that this the ignorant man may have, and the scholar may lack. What I mean may be seen in a parable in the story of Peter and John, when summoned before the Jewish Sanhedrim ; we read that “when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled ; and they took knowledge of them, *that they had been with Jesus**.” I would not have you, Christian

* Acts iv. 13.

brethren, unlearned and ignorant ; there is no learning which may not be consecrated to the highest ends, and ignorance in this place is a shame ; but I cannot refrain from warning you, (though indeed you know it,) that a certificate of being neither unlearned nor ignorant will not enable you like Peter and John to do wonderful works in the name of Christ ; no—you have need of such a view of mankind, of his condition as ruined by sin and as redeemed by the incarnation of the eternal Son, of the ever active malice of Satan and the readiness of men to listen to his temptations, of the spiritual state of that world in which your ministry is to be exercised, as one may venture to suppose was taken in the wilderness by the eye of Christ. I do not say, that such knowledge is likely to have been acquired in its completeness by any one just entering upon the Ministry ; it is a knowledge, which ever grows by active discharge of the duties which the Ministry involves,—but still the rudiments of it must be acquired by every candidate for holy orders, and he can acquire them by quiet contemplation, and perhaps in no other way. And he, who has most thoroughly entered into the spirit of

Christ's retirement as a preparation for the Ministry, will be also best qualified to follow Christ and to enter into the meaning of His words, when, coming back to Nazareth, He chose this as the text of His first address to His brethren, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,...because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor."

These two lessons, which I have ventured to draw from the history of Christ in the wilderness, have had reference more to the fact of His forty days retirement and fasting, than to the circumstance of His having been tempted by the devil. But the conflict with Satan forms so very leading and prominent a feature of the story, that it would obviously be impossible with propriety to pass it by; moreover we have, with regard to this part of the story, a special hint given by an Apostle which we may turn to good account: "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted," says the Apostle to the Hebrews, "He is able to succour them that are tempted;" and though the full application of these words may have reference to the sympathy of Christ with human infirmity in His character of Mediator before the throne of God, yet we can scarcely

hesitate also to accord a meaning to them, considered with reference to that wonderful sympathy with human sorrow, and that unspeakable gentleness towards human sin, which He exhibited in the days of His actual ministry upon earth. Now there may be some difficulty, in saying to what extent the contest of our Lord with Satan is a proper symbol of the preparation of a disciple in these days for the office of the Ministry; but this may be safely asserted, that every conflict with Satan, which has terminated in victory, is a direct advantage to any Christian. whether priest or layman, in the strength which it gives to his character and the pledge which it affords of future success. Confining myself, however, as my subject requires, to the case of the clergy, and regarding personal combat with evil as it bears upon their fitness to discharge the office of ministering to their brethren, there are two remarks which I would especially desire to make.

First, I would observe that the temptations of Satan were chiefly directed to the end of shaking the allegiance of Christ to His Father in heaven. I can hardly conceive of anything more painful to the mind of Christ, than to receive such suggestions,

and we feel no surprise that they should be indignantly rejected; but there would (I apprehend) be an effect produced upon the human spirit of the Lord, quite distinct from the mere suffering arising from Satan's attack. The spirit of Christ might be wounded; but this, like all His other wounds, would be suffered for the healing and comforting of mankind. For when Christ looked upon the world afterwards, and perceived how full it was of rebellion against God, how infidelity was the rule and faith the exception, He would remember that in His retirement in the wilderness He had been tempted to rebellion and infidelity Himself; and calling to mind the struggle, which He Himself had sustained with the evil one, He would feel more than pity for, those who were tempted to the like kind of sin. And taking this experience of Christ as a hint of the manner, in which a Minister of the Gospel in these days may be qualified by actual contest with Satan for strengthening his brethren in the like contests, I wish to lay stress upon the particular kind of temptation which was offered to the Lord; it was a suggestion of rebellion from without, there

could be no danger of lusts from within; and therefore I think we may learn from the history, more than the fact, that to have subdued the lusts and passions, and got rid, to some extent, of the love of the world, is a good—I might say a necessary—preparation for the Christian ministry. This certainly we may learn, but we may learn something more; we may conclude, that the speculative infidelity, which forms so striking a feature of the civilized world in these days of diffusion of knowledge, and which has to be grappled with by the clergy especially, must be in a certain sense sympathized with, and so understood and appreciated, before it can be attacked with success. The progress of science and application of human learning have given rise to a class of intellectual difficulties connected with revealed religion, which could not exist in a rude country, or in times of mental darkness. These difficulties may be made to appear insuperable, and in actual practice they are continually leading men, who have sufficient acuteness to see the difficulties, but not sufficient wisdom to see the solution, away from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now how are these difficulties to be met? I reply,

that they must first be acknowledged, and we must be able to sympathize with those who suffer from them; we must not, from a high, pure, and cold region of orthodoxy, denounce the wickedness of those who err from the faith; Christ would not have done thus; He would rather have sighed over the sufferings of His brethren, as He remembered how He Himself had once been compelled to combat arguments in favour of infidelity. I do not of course mean to hint, that the faith once delivered to the saints is to be clipped and pared to adapt it to the changes of human opinion; but I do mean, that when we meet with a brother who is suffering from the difficulties which he finds urged against the faith, (or at least against what is represented to be the faith,) we shall have the best hope of doing something for his relief, if we can sympathize with his trouble, and have known the weight of such trouble ourselves. And even though the character of our own minds and the nature of our education be such, that we have never felt acutely the pains of that intellectual conflict, which it is certain is going on in the minds of hundreds, still we may learn from the temptation of Christ a lesson of gentleness

and forbearance : left to ourselves, we could perhaps scarcely have believed the conflict with Satan possible, but it has been no less than three times recorded, as though to take away all doubt as to its reality ; and therefore many other spiritual conflicts may be possible, of which we in our philosophy scarcely dream, and men may be tempted, and that severely, even as Christ was tempted, and yet by God's grace it may be without sin. And it is for us, as far as we can, to help them in their conflict, and to act as the ministering angels in the wilderness, who, though they might not be able to sympathize with Christ's troubles, at least could not doubt of His agony and distress.

The other remark which is suggested to me by the temptation of Christ is this, that the ministers of the Gospel must, as a preparation for the ministry, learn to look to themselves as examples of that weakness and tendency to sin, which they would wish to correct in their brethren. Christ, who could not shew us, by any weakness of moral principle in the course of His life, the necessity of finding in ourselves the true text for all sermons upon human sinfulness, who could not exhibit to us infirmity of

purpose and the deceitfulness of the human heart in the same way as He exhibited to us infirmity of body and true human suffering, did nevertheless condescend to teach us, as by a parable, the right way of learning the power of sin, and so learning to guard others against it. For though the lusts of this present world were not in Him, yet in that mysterious vision in the wilderness even this kind of temptation was placed before Him by the power of the devil; and if, when Christ ministered on earth, men seemed easily overcome by the lusts and pleasures and cares of this world, He would remember His own temptation in the wilderness, and would pity His brethren, having suffered Himself. And thus He may teach us a lesson, applicable to ourselves in a degree in which it could not be applicable to Him, concerning the right method of learning the power of sin; it is in the experience of his own heart, in the painful lessons of his own weakness of purpose and coldness of religious feeling, in the sorrow which he has borne when he perceived how ready he has been to please himself, and how indifferent to the high calls of duty, in the shame with which his best deeds inspire him,

that he can best learn how to instruct his brethren in their warfare against sin. A man may discuss the limits of the doctrine of original sin, may talk about the corruption of human nature, may argue about regeneration, and the like ; but he will never convince his brethren of sin and so lead them to holiness, until he is convinced by reflection upon his own thoughts and deeds, that he is in the sight of God a sinner himself.

And let me add this caution, as deduced from a consideration of Christ's temptations, which, however simple and easily deduced, is nevertheless so practically important that it is safer to express it plainly—namely, that advantage can accrue to a man from temptation, only when the temptation has been resisted and overcome. This is true whether we have regard to a man's personal spiritual advantage, or to his education for the ministry of the Gospel ; a knowledge of the world, interpreted as meaning a knowledge of the evil which is in the world, by having mixed with it and become polluted by it, and it may be having grown weary of it, is a kind of knowledge which is of doubtful value to any man, and certainly of undoubted mischief to a

minister of Christ. The really valuable knowledge is that, which is acquired by observing, how temptations are offered, what is the secret of their power, and what the best means of resisting them. And temptations there always must be; in a place like this especially, there will be temptations of intellect and temptations of idleness, temptations of the world, of the flesh, and of the devil; they cannot be excluded if we would exclude them; no college walls or college regulations can shut out those tendencies to evil, which ever shoot forth abundantly from the human heart. Nor, regarding this place as a nursery for the Christian Ministry, would I desire to do more than guard against giving an advantage to those temptations, with which of necessity all young men must contend; I would rather press upon you, young Christian brethren, that this residence of yours here is of importance to your future lives, and especially important to the future lives of you who are to become ministers of the Gospel, regarded as a time in which you have to do battle with evil and to overcome it. It is no part of my present purpose to enter into details concerning the dangers of this place, or rather the

dangers of that period of life, at which those who come into residence have arrived ; I only desire now to beg you to regard your lives here,—not merely as they may cause you satisfaction or remorse hereafter, when you consider how much you have gained or lost for yourselves,—but as they have to do with the success or failure of the work, which you will have to undertake for your brethren and for Christ. O how important are your victories over the world, the the flesh, and the devil, over sloth, over selfishness, over wild tempers and uncharitable feelings, when you consider that you may soon have to describe yourselves as “ called of God to be apostles, separated unto the Gospel of Jesus Christ !” and how lamentable are your falls, and the victories which Satan or the world gain over you, when you consider that your yielding to temptation is not only misery to yourselves, but cruelty and injustice towards the spiritual interests of those, of whom you will have to give an account to God !

Pardon me therefore, young Christian brethren, if I use great plainness of speech, in pressing upon you the urgent need of preparing yourselves for doing God’s work in the world, not only by

intellectual acquirement, but by purity and holiness and sobriety. We want a learned clergy, we want an orthodox clergy, but above all we want a clergy pure, discreet, and holy ; and they must be no mere novices in the religious life, they must not have run wild here and then put on religion when they put on their clerical garb ; these can never be the salt of the earth, these can never be the light of the world. I judge no man ; I would not be thought to be desirous of judging any one of you ; but I implore all of you, who are looking forward to the Ministry as your possible future occupation, to consider whether your lives are such, as to fit you for that charge,—the most solemn and weighty that can be entrusted to human hands,—THE CURE OF SOULS.

SERMON IV.

S. MARK i. 12, 13.

“And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.

And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts: and the angels ministered unto Him.”

I HAVE reserved for this final discourse the simplest and most practical view of the history of our Lord's Temptation in the Wilderness. It is that view which represents Him in this, as in other passages of His life, in the character of a pattern for His brethren; as having done battle and overcome, in order that we might learn how we also may successfully combat against sin, the world, and the devil. And I have reserved this view of the subject for to-day, because it is that which is especially brought before our minds by the appointed services of the Church. This being the first Sunday of the Lenten

Season, that season in which we are to think upon the deadly character of sin and the need of penitence, the Church exhibits to us in the Gospel of the day the picture of Christ overcoming the Tempter, and teaches us to make our petition in the Collect, that He would give us grace to follow in His own steps.

I do not suppose that any one who is at a loss to find proof of the reality of sin, and of the danger arising from temptations to commit it, would be satisfied by that which is to be found in the history of the Lord's own spiritual combat. If a person does not find abundance of demonstration in the contemplation of the world in which he lives, and in the experience of his own heart and life, of the existence of that which God cannot possibly approve, and of causes tending to lead us into evil ways contrary to the dictates of our judgment and conscience, or if in order to make his experience square with his philosophy he neglects the plain testimony of facts, then I do not suppose that he will find anything which he will deem particularly valuable in the fact of Christ having "suffered being tempted;" but if the existence of evil in the

world and the tendencies to evil in himself be at once the most undeniable, the most sad, and almost the most mysterious phenomena with which he is acquainted, then the study of Christ's temptation will probably be found to supply the most blessed source both of light and warmth to guide and to cheer him in his passage through this present world. My purpose will be therefore, in the first place, to call attention to some of the circumstances of the history, which may have special importance with reference to this view of its general bearing, and then to found upon it some plain practical consequences.

In the first place, no one can have read the history without observing, that Jesus is said not to have retired into the wilderness, but to have been conducted there. No two of the Evangelists make use of the same expression in order to record the manner of the retirement, but they all three refer it to the agency of the Spirit, and S. Mark uses the very strong term, "the Spirit *driveth* Him." If therefore we should describe the retirement of Christ into the wilderness merely as a retirement, if we should represent Him as having

merely withdrawn Himself from the world for the purpose of meditating upon His great work and preparing Himself to perform it, it is plain that we should speak only a part of the truth. And it is important not to omit to dwell upon the truth in its entirety; partly, because the language of the Evangelists may remind us, that the solitude and horrors of the wilderness, and the combat to be sustained there, were as painful to the flesh and blood of Christ and as abhorrent from His feelings as they could be from our own; and because it is such passages in our Saviour's life as this, which afford the most affecting illustrations of that affecting prophecy of Isaiah, which spoke of Him "as led like a lamb to the slaughter:" but partly also, and so far as our present subject is concerned chiefly, because we find in the language of the Gospels a testimony that Christ did not rashly seek temptation, that He did not Himself act on a principle opposed to that laid down in His own prayer, and that consequently, when Satan found Him in the wilderness, he found Him where God had placed Him, and where He had therefore a right to expect that God would also deliver Him from evil.

Nor is it unworthy of notice, with reference to the subject now in hand, that the place into which Christ was led by the Spirit was a wilderness. Regarded in the light of a place of retirement and of preparation for the ministry, the wilderness might in many ways appear suitable, and might be chosen for the temporary abode of Christ for the same reasons which pointed it out as the fitting home for His forerunner; but regarded as the scene of temptation by the devil, it might perhaps appear to us as one of the last places likely to have been so selected; and the fact of its selection might often have been turned to profit by those, who have retired into solitude with the vain hope of escaping from the temptations of the devil. And indeed it is a fact to think upon, that though Christ did not, like S. John, adopt asceticism as the rule of His life, though He mixed freely with the society of His country, and though it was made matter of reproach against Him that He was "gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," yet we nowhere read of Satan having taken advantage of His converse with the world to suggest worldly thoughts; no, it was in the solitude of the wilderness, where,

as one might have imagined, the whole mind would have been wrapped in holy contemplation, that Satan was able three times to put before the Saviour his varied suggestions of evil,—one of those moreover being nothing less than the pomps and vanities of this wicked world: and when Satan left Him for a season, having been subdued and bid to depart, we never read of his return, until, when Christ's intercourse with the world was completed, and He was about to retire into the solitude of Gethsemane, He Himself announced that the Prince of this world was coming to try His steadfastness again.

Next it may be observed, that the time at which the Spirit drove Christ into the wilderness is critical, not only from the point of view which was taken in a former discourse, but also from that which I am taking now. For when we read, that Christ, at His baptism, was declared to be the Son of God by the descent of the Spirit and by a voice from heaven, we cannot fail to be struck by the assertion that "*immediately* the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness." We cannot fail to be struck by the pointed manner, in which the divine and human nature of Christ are thus made to illustrate

each other, the scene at the baptism declaring in the most wonderful manner His Godhead, while that in the wilderness appeals even to our feelings of compassion in favour of the truth of His manhood. But besides this conclusion from the history, we cannot help drawing this other also, namely, that the testimony borne to the greatness of Christ and the truth of His character was no guarantee against the sufferings and temptations incident to humanity; that the necessity of personal conflict was not obviated even by a visible baptism with the Spirit and a voice from heaven; but that perhaps it would be a more true view of the case if we should suppose, that the special grace of that baptism was attested by an outward and visible sign, such as was never granted to any other man, because the conflict about to be sustained was so immeasurably more severe than it has ever fallen to the lot of any other man to undergo. Like Elijah in the wilderness, we may perhaps venture to say, that Christ went for forty days and forty nights in the strength of that divine support.

Still further, the fact of Christ having fasted during His forty days' retirement is important, with respect to the view of the subject which we are now

taking. For this discipline of fasting would seem to have two very opposite influences upon the history, and the compatibility of such opposite influences is a fact of very general human interest. In the first place, the fasting of Christ can hardly be regarded otherwise than as a solemn preparation for the conflict, which would seem (from the language of the Evangelists) not to have commenced until the forty days were concluded. This is the most obvious view of the case ; it is that which seems to have been embodied by the Catholic Church in the institution of the Lenten Fast ; and certainly it is that expressed by the Church of England in the Collect which we have used to-day. And indeed if we suppose our Lord to have foreseen the attack which would be made upon Him, it is hard to believe that the time elapsing before the attack was made would be employed in any other way than that, which would itself be the best preparation for repelling it, and the best lesson for all mankind upon the manner of resisting temptation. This view of the case therefore would seem to be plain and undeniable ; but then, on the other hand, it is equally clear, and quite as worthy of notice, that the long

fast of the Saviour was made by Satan the very ground of his first attack. The challenge, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," drew all its strength from the fact, that when Satan came Christ "hungered;" and even in the other two temptations one may well suppose, that the feeble condition of Christ's bodily frame was regarded by the Tempter as a circumstance likely to give his suggestions an additional probability of success. But any how, the first opening of the attack was manifestly based upon that very discipline which Christ had undergone; and we may conclude therefore, that it is quite possible that those means, which are useful for the subduing of sin, may be turned to advantage by the enemy; and that in the case of our conflict with sin as in others this may be true, that the things which should have been for our health may become to us occasions of falling.

But Christ shewed by His triumph over the successive and varied attacks of Satan, that the preparatory discipline, though it might be abused by the Tempter as a means of sin, could be used by Himself as a means still more powerful for

confirming in holiness and in obedience ; and if I do not lay stress upon the Lord's victory, as one of the circumstances of the story bearing particularly upon the view of it which we are now taking, it is only because the whole force and meaning of the history so entirely turn upon the fact of the victory, that it seems hardly necessary to dwell upon it apart from the rest. I rather pass on to observe, that the attendance of the angels, when the conflict was over and the triumph gained, is worthy of the notice of those, who would wish to gain from the tale of Christ's temptation light and guidance and comfort concerning their own ; not only because it testifies of the true human weakness and suffering of Christ, and so proves to us that the fight was real, that Christ fought in it as a man and as a true example for men, but also because it is the best evidence we can have that earthly conflicts with the powers of evil have now also heavenly spectators, and that each man who contends earnestly and in the spirit of Christ against his enemies has a right to believe in the presence of ministering spirits, sent by God to strengthen him in his infirmities. Ministering spirits—yes—there is nothing fanatical in the

notion ; rather is it a want of faith and a proof of inattention to the history of the life of Christ, if we suppose that angels have been banished from God's universe in modern days. I cannot tell what may be the laws of their ministrations, nor how much of what we class under the general name of Providence might be properly spoken of as the ministration of angels, nor how much the blessing of common prayer and sacraments may be enhanced by the presence of unseen worshippers, nor how much of what we attribute to resolution and strength of mind may be sometimes due to an angel from heaven strengthening us,—I neither desire nor am able to trace the limits of angelic operations ; but I am sure that, as Christians reading the history of Christ in the wilderness and again in the garden of Gethsemane, we shall be to blame if we do not regard the presence of angels as a real element of our own spiritual strength.

When the angels had ministered to Christ, then He left the wilderness and commenced His Ministry in the world. Until the conclusion of that Ministry Satan seems not to have approached Him again ; for I apprehend, that when the Lord spoke to His

disciples as those “who had been with Him in His temptations*,” He referred rather to the troubles and trials of His life, or at most to the temptations which He had met with from His unbelieving countrymen, and not to any suggestions of evil of the same nature as those which He received in the wilderness. So that the temptation in the wilderness represents in a certain way that conflict with evil, which in our own case is co-extensive with our lives; I cannot tell why Satan should have departed for so long a season,—this may be one of the mysteries of the twofold nature of Christ,—but in order that it might be patent to all Christians, that the Divine nature of their Master did not exempt Him from those conflicts, which form a chief feature of their own spiritual lives, therefore Christ not only submitted to temptation, but also took care that the tale of that temptation should be told wherever His Gospel should be preached. And so has it been demonstrated for us in the most wonderful and divine manner, that temptation is the lot of mankind, that to contend against temptation is our

* S. Luke xxii. 28.

duty, and that to be victorious over temptation is our privilege.

And now, regarding our Lord's temptation with especial reference to our own conflict with evil, and bearing in mind those features of the history to which I have called attention, there are several remarks which I think might be made with advantage to any congregation, but with peculiar advantage to a congregation such as this. For this is to a great extent a congregation of *young men*; and the subject of the Lord's temptation, regarded as an example and a lesson, commends itself especially to those, whose youthful passions and appetites, and even whose youthful health and vigour, give to a certain class of temptations peculiar force and a corresponding degree of danger. Many a young man may be conscious, that by God's grace he has been able to a considerable extent to resist sin; but every young man also will feel so well assured of the weakness of his flesh, so conscious of tendencies to evil, so thoroughly convinced that it is only by vigorous effort in the strength of God and by faith in Christ that he has been able to avoid the evil which is in the world through lust, that he will not

lightly neglect any hints concerning his warfare with sin, which the history of Christ's warfare may supply. Moreover, there is in the minds of young persons in general a frankness and openness to conviction, a readiness to accept advice kindly offered, and a willingness to apply to themselves that which they honestly perceive to be applicable, which (I confess) always inspire me with hopefulness and confidence, when I am called upon to speak to them as a Minister of Christ. And of course I do not forget, that this congregation does not merely contain young men, but young men concerning whom it is important, not only for their own sakes but for the character and welfare of the whole country, that they should be Christian young men,—not merely Christians in name but in very deed,—like Christ in purity, like Him in obedience, like Him in charity; I do not forget this,—it is impossible that any one occupying this pulpit should do so,—but I remind you of it in passing, in order that I may put in the clearest light possible the importance of dwelling upon such applications of my subject, as those upon which I am now entering.

In the first place it is obvious to remark from the example of Christ, that no one has any right to throw himself into temptation. Christ did not seek an opportunity for combat with Satan, but the Spirit led Him up into the wilderness, and there Satan sought *Him*; and therefore throughout the conflict Christ had this thought to rest upon, that He was where He was because God had placed Him there. And though the lesson is very easily drawn from this, that Christians must avoid all circumstances which may prove a snare to them, and not only use the words of Christ in their daily prayers, "Lead us not into Temptation," but also guide their conduct in such a way as not to give their prayers the lie, still the lesson is in matter of fact one which young men very frequently do not learn. For instance, a man, especially a *young* man, who is not careful as to what company he keeps, who stands in the way of sinners or sits in the seat of the scornful, who allows himself to hear purity of conduct and high principles of honour made a joke of, and religion derided and religious men nicknamed, and sinful indulgences palliated, and who in this and the like ways exposes himself to

the contamination of vice which he dare not reprove,—any one who thus comports himself distinctly leads himself into temptation, and must take the consequence of wilful tampering with evil. Or again a person, who, forgetting that though in one sense the flesh is weak, yet in another it is awfully strong, strong in its lusts and passions, strong in the vigour of health and young blood,—forgetting this, or at all events neglecting to act upon the truth of it,—puts no curb upon his natural, and in a certain sense innocent, appetites, uses no kind of abstinence, forgets that advice of Solomon concerning those “who tarry long at the wine,...who look upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour to the cup*,”—a person who acts thus, how can he wonder if he be seduced into sin? how can he with a solemn countenance say in the Lord’s Prayer, “Our Father which art in heaven,...deliver us from evil,” when he has himself been deliberately allowing to his adversary all the advantage, which it was in his power to give, or in that of Satan to desire? Or to take a more general view, how can a person expect to gain those victories

* Prov. xxi. 30, 31.

which are necessary for the foundation and establishment of a really Christlike character, the character which we admire when we see it, which we honour in those whom we love and reverence the most, if self-indulgence be the very law of his life? If there be any one truth unassailable it is this, that selfishness is the character of mind which is most natural, most hateful, and most difficult to overcome, and that it is the entire absence of this feeling in the Lord Jesus Christ which chiefly makes us sensible of the divine perfection of beauty belonging to His character; I do not undertake now to say how self is to be overcome, but I do assert that it is nonsense to talk about overcoming it, if to indulge ourselves in everything and to deny ourselves in nothing be the principle upon which we practically live. But again, a man cannot be said to have avoided temptation, who is not careful concerning the books with which he employs his leisure time; I wish to lay down no narrow or impracticable rules, but there *are* books which are very mischievous companions of solitude, and very unworthy to occupy the place which might be filled by noble works of genius, tending to strengthen

and elevate the mind, and so to make a man wiser and better by the reading. Nor, again, can a man be said to have kept himself away from temptation, who has made no “covenant with his eyes”—you know the rest of the verse. Nor, lastly—for I need not trouble you with more examples—can a young man in this place be said to have done his best not to run the risk of a wilful conflict with Satan, who has not given his mind to the studies of the place and laboured diligently to improve his time. We are sometimes told that the Universities are dangerous places,—of course they are, of course by their very nature they must be, it is impossible to take away opportunities of evil, it would be very foolish to attempt it; but this may be said, that a University is not a dangerous place to him, who comes for the only legitimate purpose for which a young man ought to enter a University, namely, for the honest purpose of study and improvement. Idleness is bad enough anywhere, but here where it is a contradiction to the very spirit and design of the place, an insult to the memory of those by whose munificence the Colleges and University are what they are, idleness is a tenfold sin; and not

only so, but it is no exaggeration to say, that as industry is the best ally and supporter of religious principle, so contrariwise for a young man to give himself up to idleness in a place like this is as direct a mode, as can well be devised, of giving himself up to be tempted by the devil.

Indeed as for a residence in this University being made free from danger, safe from temptation, the notion is not only absurd to the mind of any practical man, but also one great lesson which the subject before us teaches is this, that no place can be free from temptation. Christ went up into the wilderness to conquer the power of the devil; many of His disciples have sought the wilderness with the hope of avoiding it; and the lesson which might have been learnt by studying the experience of Christ, many have been compelled to learn by sad experience of their own. We have been told by poets, and have been told truly, that solitude itself, in the deepest meaning of the word, is not ensured by the absence of human companions; that in the loneliest wilderness nature may charm the heart with a feeling of society, whereas in the most crowded city there may be such an entire absence

of sympathy, as shall produce the sense of being deserted and alone; and the same thing no doubt is true of temptation from the world, the flesh, and the devil; in this sense also "the mind is its own place," and the wilderness may be full of temptation and the city may be a place of safety. But perhaps we may venture to say, that in this case a lesson may be learned more from the contrast, than from the agreement, of Christ's nature with our own. With Him the wilderness could be the scene of temptation as easily as the Temple, or the street, or the house of a Pharisee, because in either case Satan had to seek Him; with ourselves the wilderness is no safe place from temptation, because Satan has not to seek us, but our own hearts supply us with occasions of evil. And so the result is the same; safety from evil can be assured by no outward circumstances; bolts and bars and College regulations can be no guarantee of inward purity; the new birth unto righteousness is of the operation of the Holy Ghost. At the same time I may perhaps be allowed to say, that vice is so far rendered difficult to those who reside here, occasions of temptation are to such an extent removed, the

society of the wise and good is so easy to be obtained, and the atmosphere of the place is so far pure, that the blood of any young man who owes his ruin to his residence in Cambridge must lie upon his own head.

But I pass on to remark, that the circumstance to which I called attention in our Lord's temptation, namely, that the preparation made by Him for His conflict with the Tempter was the very point upon which the first temptation was founded, may warn us that in our own case also something of the same kind may be true. That is, the very discipline to which a person submits himself, for the purpose of overcoming sin, may possibly be made a snare to him; and he may perhaps lose as much one way as he gains another. And so it has been sometimes seen, for instance, that those who have given themselves to an ascetic life, and have no doubt honestly done battle with their lusts and passions, have left other points assailable, have become perhaps crabbed and morose, or have forced their minds into narrow views of religious doctrine, and so have failed to adorn their principles, and to be a light to attract their brethren

into the ways of holiness. There is in fact a danger of the symmetry of the Christian character being destroyed; and so self-discipline may become self-righteousness, and religion may become morbid; and not to love the world may cease to be a Christian virtue, because it may be made to mean the assumption of such a position as may prevent us from being a light to the world, and be utterly opposite in spirit to the conduct of God Himself, of whom we read that He "so loved the world," that He sent His Son to redeem it. While, however, I give this warning as fairly deducible from the history, I think it also right to say, that possibly a person who employs himself earnestly in endeavouring to conquer sin and to imitate Christ may sometimes be distressed with the feeling that his efforts are abortive, and yet may be distressed without due cause. For no one can be aware of the imperfections of his character and conduct, until he has set himself to work to amend them; and many of us may be quite easy and content with our condition, not because it is what it ought to be, but because, like the angel of the Church in Laodicea, we do not know that we are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked;" and

as it is frequently found that the endeavours of benevolent people to rectify some evil, which they perceive to be afflicting society, seem at first to exaggerate the evil, because they lay open sores which we did not know to exist, and make us conscious of evil which never called forth our sympathy because it never attracted our notice, so it may be that the effort to "crucify the old man and utterly abolish the whole body of sin," the endeavour to act up to his profession, "which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him," may at first have the effect of depressing a man's mind and almost driving him to despair.

There is one other lesson which I will deduce from the history. I noticed that the temptation of the Lord immediately followed the superlative grace of His baptism, and His recognition as God's beloved Son; and I might, if it were necessary, remark, that the spotless life of Christ spent in doing good and destroying the works of the devil, did not prevent Satan from returning to the attack when he had left Christ for a season. And it seems to me that the bearing of these facts in the life of Christ upon our own lives is very important;

pointing out as they do, that no one of us has any right to look upon grace received, or any religious advantages, or previous success in combating evil, as a guarantee for the future against the attacks of Satan. I by no means desire to disparage religious advantages of whatever kind; and I have no doubt but that he, who like Christ in his boyhood is subject to his parents and who is found in the Temple of God, will be most successful when in a later period of life he is tempted to evil; and I have no doubt also, but that he, who most imitates Christ in his conduct, will be the most likely to be able to say like Him, when the close of life approaches, "The Prince of this world hath nothing in me:" but still I think we ought to remember, that religious advantages are aids to victory over temptation, not charms to prevent temptation coming; and that we shall be liable to all kinds of peril, if we do not ever act upon that truth, which was professed for us in our baptism, as the great truth upon which we were to live, namely, that we are called to a lifelong fight against sin, the world, and the devil, and to remain Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to our lives' end.

These are some of the lessons which seem to be capable of being drawn, when we look upon the general circumstances of our Lord's temptation, as suggestive of the manner in which we also have to contend with sin. They by no means exhaust the subject; indeed they do but lead us to the threshold of that, which may perhaps be regarded as the true centre of it all, namely, the light thrown upon the spiritual conflicts of mankind by the actual temptations, which are recorded as having been offered to our Lord; whether we regard those three as having been the only temptations, or as specimens of a crowd of suggestions offered to the mind of Christ, the conclusion remains the same, namely, that the history of the temptation was given in the form in which we have it, as being well suited to illustrate the temptations to sin, with which Christians must meet in this present world. I do not, however, intend to give this extension to the subject; but I will crave your permission before leaving it, to say a few words upon the actual temptations, with particular reference to the circumstances of this place.

I would take occasion from our Lord's first temptation to remark, that although in His case

advantage was taken of His solitude and hunger to allure Him to sin, yet Satan knows quite as well how to take advantage of precisely the opposite circumstances, namely, society and fulness of bread. There are temptations from being rich as well as from being poor ; to be at ease and free from care may be as dangerous, as to be persecuted for righteousness' sake ; and in the Litany we are wisely taught to pray the good Lord to deliver us, " in all time of our wealth," as well as " in all time of our tribulation." And if we look to the history of the Church, when has she done the most mighty works, when she could say, " Silver and gold have I none," or when she has been " clad in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day ?" So far as the University is concerned, I have no wish to assume the office of censor ; but I think that we should do well to recognize the side from which we are most liable to danger, because the more clearly we see the danger the more likely we are by God's grace to avoid it. And so far as the younger members of our body are concerned, I am sure that I shall not by them be deemed to be giving an unnecessary warning, when I say, that the possibility of giving themselves up to the mere pursuit of pleasure,

to the mere indulgence of self, to the mere love of ease,—for I abstain from even hinting at the thought of an utter abandonment to vice,—that this possibility, which no regulations of Colleges or superintendence of tutors can by any means do away with, is one great trial of their principles, and one great source of danger, if it be not guarded against. “Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;”—these are words, which a young man may, if he will, assume as the motto of his Cambridge course; but he cannot say like the fool in the parable, “Thou hast much goods laid up for many years;”—the few years of College life are soon gone, and who shall bring them back again? will the remembrance of the eating and drinking and being merry make amends for the loss sustained, in the calm estimate of after-life?

And may not our Lord's second temptation be fairly taken as reminding us of a very opposite danger, to which the atmosphere of a place like this may render us liable, namely, that of an undue pride of intellect? There is danger of our adopting a merely intellectual standard of excellence, both in estimating others, and in judging ourselves; a *good*

man is liable to be regarded as too nearly synonymous with a *clever* man; and for ourselves we are liable to put upon the pure intellect a value which does not belong to it, and so to be misled into error by using a merely intellectual apparatus for the investigation of truth, in cases in which other appliances are required. And yet perhaps it will not be those, who have taken the most complete and symmetrical view of human knowledge, who will be most likely to be exalted upon a pinnacle, and tempted to presumption; he who has most thoroughly mastered the works of human thought will best know, what cannot, as well as what can, be so learned; it is the clever, inquisitive, but insufficiently ballasted mind, which is most likely to be deceived by representations of the omnipotence of human reason, and so to fall down from the pinnacle, and find no angels to save it from the depths of scepticism; on the other hand, a well educated and well balanced mind may be taught by the very completeness of its knowledge, that there is a wisdom to be learned by walking with Christ which cannot be learned elsewhere, and that he who is willing to do God's will is permitted to know of Christ's doctrine whether it be true or no.

For the third temptation I would say briefly, that in whatever position of life we may be, the temptation offered to Christ, of preferring the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, before the kingdom of God, of laying up treasure on earth and not in heaven, of setting our affections upon things beneath, not upon things above, is the great prevailing temptation of humanity, and one against which Christ and His apostles often directed their exhortations. I do not know that we are in more danger from this temptation here than in other places, because it is the peculiar and most powerful feature of that sin, which may intelligibly be called *worldliness*, that it presents itself equally to rich and poor, to learned and ignorant, to old and young; it does but vary its form, in its essence it is fundamentally the same; but this perhaps may be justly said, that it is of more general importance that some should guard against the sin than others, because in the case of some the love of the world may be chiefly their own loss, whereas in others it may be ruin to their brethren. And so it was, that when the prophet Malachi was called upon to protest against the worldliness of the men of his generation, the chief burden of his message was to the priests,—

they it was, whose base views of their office had not only brought a curse upon themselves, but had made the table of the Lord contemptible, and caused the people to commit abominations. And so too it is manifest in these days, that if there be one class of persons more than another concerning whom it is important, that they should not be conformed to this present world, that their treasure should not be laid up on earth, that they should take a high and holy and honourable view of their work, that they should really believe as they profess, and act as they believe, it is those who have been consecrated to the Christian priesthood, or those who are looking forward to be priests in due time.

And now, before I conclude, I must in a few words direct your attention to that particular application of our Lord's example in the wilderness, which has been pointed out to us by the Church services of this day. We have all prayed to-day to that "Lord who for our sakes did fast forty days and forty nights," that He would "give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey His godly motions in righteousness and true holiness;" we

have thus recognized Christ as an example, not only in the temptations which He suffered, but also in the means which He took to arm Himself against those temptations ; and having thus prayed, we are bound in consistency to carry out our prayers into our practice. As to the manner in which this should be done, the Church of England lays down no formal rules, and therefore I lay down none ; and I the more carefully abstain from even hinting at such rules, because the whole subject, which is brought before us by to-day's Collect as a practical one, and which cannot safely be otherwise treated, has unfortunately been in this country mixed up with party views, and, instead of being reserved for making war against Satan, has rather been made a firebrand in the Christian camp ; though in truth it would be easy to shew by the production of names, that good men of all shades of religious opinion have seen nothing but true practical wisdom in the discipline which the Church enjoins. I am well aware, that much that is erroneous has been spoken on both sides of the question, as there always will be when a matter concerning the religious life is allowed to be a matter of mere literary discussion ; but instead of dwelling upon such errors, I rather

point you to the teaching of the Church of England, and to your own prayer this day offered, as the best guide to the truth. And two things there are which seem to be quite clear ; first, that the Church of England lays down no precise rules, as to the manner in which this Lenten Season is to be observed ; and secondly, that the Church of England does quite as clearly demand of her children, that Lent shall not be a mere name, but a real spiritual thing. Do we wonder that such a season should have been appointed, or rather that it should not have been swept away as a Popish observance, a remnant of dark times ? He will scarcely wonder at its retention, who knows the dangers arising from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and who has found how hard it is to maintain anything like that standard of purity of thought and word and works, which his own judgment approves and which becomes him as a disciple of Christ. And if any one should need a testimony to the evil and the power of sin, beyond that which his own conscience supplies, he may easily find such testimony, nay it will be even forced upon him, by looking to those pictures of the experience of Christ with which Lent commences and concludes ; to-day we see Christ

combating Satan in the wilderness, suffering being alone and a hungered, but still more acutely suffering being tempted; the conclusion of Lent will exhibit Him to us, bearing the burden of sin in His own body on the tree, for us men and for our salvation crucified and slain. O there is enough in any one day's experience to a thoughtful man, to teach him the reality of evil and the need of subduing it; but in these visions of the life and death of the Eternal Son, there is that, which brings us acquainted with a far more awful experience, and which will teach us the lesson more forcibly still: and though our own weakness may ever remind us of the necessity of being on our guard against temptation, yet it can never give so forcible a warning as that which we find in the records of the weakness of Christ. In His experience and example then, let us recognize the best commentary upon His own words, which I leave with you as the fittest guide throughout Lent, and indeed throughout life, "WATCH AND PRAY."

Notes.

NOTES.

Page 2, line 11. Dr Mill preached "Five Sermons on the Temptation of Christ our Lord in the Wilderness," in the Lent season of 1844. The first two are of an introductory character; the last three treat of the three several temptations, and are entitled, "The Temptation of Sensual Distrust," "The Temptation of Worldly Ambition," and "The Temptation of Spiritual Presumption," S. Luke's order being followed. I advert to this very valuable course of sermons, which are probably in the hands of many members of the University, merely for the purpose of alleging the entire distinctness of the mode of treatment of the history adopted by myself, as a reason for having ventured upon a subject comparatively recently treated by such a man.

Amongst those who have treated upon this subject in one or more sermons, may be mentioned Bishop Andrewes, Sherlock, Bishop Van Mildert, Dr Samuel Clarke, and above all, Massillon. The skill with which this last makes the history yield a continuous lesson to those in high places, is very striking: here is the skeleton of his sermon given in the exordium.

"Les grands sont les premiers objets de sa fureur (du tentateur): plus exposés que les autres hommes à ses séductions et à ses pièges, il commence de bonne heure

à leur en préparer; et comme leur chute lui répond de celle de tous ceux presque qui dépendent d'eux, il rassemble tous ses traits pour les perdre.

“ ‘Changez ces pierres en pain,’ dit il à Jésus Christ. Il l’attaque d’abord par le plaisir; et c’est le premier piège qu’il dresse à leur innocence.

“ ‘Puisque vous êtes le Fils de Dieu,’ ajoute-t-il, ‘il enverra ses anges pour vous garder.’ Il continue par l’adulation, et c’est un trait encore plus dangereux dont il empoisonne leur âme.

“ Enfin, ‘Je vous donnerai les royaumes du monde et toute leur gloire’; et il finit par l’ambition, et c’est la dernière et la plus sûre ressource qu’il emploie pour triompher de leur faiblesse.

“ Ainsi le plaisir commence à leur corrompre le cœur; l’adulation l’affermit dans l’égarement, et lui ferme toutes les voies de la vérité; l’ambition consomme l’aveuglement, et achève de creuser le précipice.”

Bishop Andrewes’ series of sermons, though preserved in an imperfect form, are good specimens of his peculiar skill in the treatment of Scripture, and are worthy of study.

P. 6, l. 18. Neander says, “Christ left to His disciples and the church only a partial and symbolical account of the facts of His inner life in this preparatory epoch;” and adds in a note, “We can apply here Dr Nitzsch’s remark in reference to the Biblical account of the Fall, ‘The history of the Temptation, in this form, is not a *real*, but a *true* history.’”

I trust I need hardly say, that by the words “you may doubt whether it be historical,” I did not intend

to suggest the possibility of the story of the Temptation being mythical; I intended rather to suggest, that it might be a question with some whether the term *historical* exactly expresses the peculiar character of the narrative: see the sentence at the foot of page 4.

P. 8, l. 16. The view taken in this sermon of the relation of the Temptations to the life of our Lord is substantially the same as that taken in Farmer's "Inquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness," which, however, I had not read when the sermon was written. Farmer endeavours to shew, that the evangelical history is an account neither of an outward transaction, nor of a diabolical illusion, and that therefore it must represent merely a divine vision; in this part of his inquiry I do not sympathize, though I think that it contains a certain amount of truth; but the coincidence of the view taken in Sermon I. with those of the "Inquiry," will be seen from the following extract from the table of contents.

SECTION IV.

"Pointing out the proper intention of Christ's prophetic vision; and shewing that the several scenes which it contains, though presented to Him in the form, and capable of answering the end of a present trial, were directly intended as a symbolical prediction, and representation of the principal trials and difficulties of His public ministry.

"The account here given of Christ's temptation, both as a present trial and as an emblem and prefiguration of His future conflicts, justified by a distinct and particular examination of its several scenes.

“1st scene. In this, Christ is tempted by the devil to turn stones into bread, to satisfy His hunger: which was designed to shew, that He was to struggle with all the hardships of poverty, and the other evils of humanity, but never, not even on the most pressing occasions, to exert His miraculous power for His own personal relief.

“2nd scene. In this, Christ is tempted by the devil to cast himself down from a wing of the temple at Jerusalem; to shew, that He was not to expose His person to danger without necessity, from a confidence in the divine protection; and that He was to avoid an ostentatious display of His divine powers, without suffering others to prescribe to Him, what miracles should be wrought for their conviction.

“3rd scene. In this, Christ is tempted with the offer of all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, to fall down and worship the devil; to shew, that He would be called upon, in consequence of the mistaken notions of His countrymen concerning the Messiah’s kingdom, to prostitute Himself, with all His divine endowments, to the service of Satan, for the sake of worldly advancement, or in order to ascend to the throne of Israel, and to spread His conquests over all the heathen nations.”

That such lessons as these were intended I have no doubt; the only dangers appear to me to be those of assuming that they were the only lessons, and of defining too exactly the manner in which they were conveyed. Mr Farmer was a dissenting minister, and a pupil of Dr Doddridge.

Schleiermacher says, (Critical Essay on the Gospel of

S. Luke), "As to the thing itself, I can neither consider it as an ecstasy—for we have no instances of states of ecstasy in the history of Christ—nor as a figurative representation of what took place in Christ. For had He entertained, even in the most transient manner, thoughts of such a nature, he would have ceased to be Christ, and this explanation appears to me the grossest outrage that has been committed in modern times against His person. Since, however, we can as little allow it to pass for matter of fact, the most natural alternative is to consider it, as others have done already, as a parable. Three leading maxims of Christ, for Himself and for those who were invested by Him with extraordinary powers for the promotion of His kingdom, are therein expressed: the first, to perform no miracle for His own advantage, even under the most pressing circumstances; the second, never to undertake, in the hope of extraordinary divine aid, anything which, like the dropping from the pinnacle of the temple, as it does not lie in the natural course of things, would be merely prodigious; lastly, never, though the greatest immediate advantage were by that means attainable, to enter into fellowship with the wicked, and still less into a state of dependence upon them; and Christ could not express Himself more strongly against the opposite mode of conduct, than by ascribing it to Satan."

These maxims no doubt were conveyed in the history of the Temptations, but surely it is rash and unlawful to resolve the history *merely* into a parable intended to convey these maxims.

Neander says, "While, on the one hand, we do not conceive that the individual features of the account

of the Temptation are to be literally taken, the principles, which triumph so gloriously in its course, bear the evident stamp of that wisdom which everywhere shines forth from the life of Christ. Its veracity is undeniably confirmed by the period which it occupies between the baptism of Christ, and His entrance on His public ministry; the silent, solitary preparation was a natural transition from the one to the other. We conclude, from both these considerations together, that the account contains not only an ideal, but also an historical truth, conveyed however under a symbolical form.

“The easiest part of our task is to ascertain the import of the several parts of the Temptation, and to this we now address ourselves. We shall find in them the principles which guided Jesus through His whole Messianic calling—principles directly opposed to the notions prevalent among the Jews in regard to the Messiah.”

Neander then proceeds to deduce from the several temptations, lessons such as those contained in the preceding extract from Schleiermacher. There is much that is very valuable in the whole of Neander’s discussion of the Temptation, as (I need not say) there is in almost every portion of his “Life of Christ.”

The view thus taken of our Lord’s temptations appears to me so striking, and when once suggested to carry so much conviction of its truth, that I am surprised to find no trace of it in such of the Fathers as I have been able to consult. The pervading view of the subject with them seems to be that important and most true one, which the Church of England embodies in the collect for the first Sunday in Lent. Thus, S. Chrysostom says, in commenting upon S. Matthew iv. 1: *Τότε ὁ*

Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη, κ.τ.λ. Τότε, πότε; μετὰ τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος κάθοδον, μετὰ τὴν φωνὴν τὴν ἄνωθεν ἐνεχθεῖσαν. ὑπὸ ποίου ἐκ Πνεύματος ἀνήχθη; ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου. διατί δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου πειρασθῆναι; ἐπειδὴ πάντα πρὸς διδασκαλίαν ἡμῶν ἔπραττεν· ἵνα εἴαν τις τῶν βαπτιζομένων μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα μείζονας ὑπομείνῃ πειρασμούς, μὴ ταραττήται, ὥς παρὰ προσδοκίαν τοῦ πράγματος γινομένου· ἀλλὰ μείνῃ γενναίως πάντα φέρων· καὶ γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐλάβομεν ὅπλα νοητά, οὐχ ἵνα ἀργῶμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα πολεμῶμεν.

I observe that Bishop Andrewes in his Sermons on the Temptation, or rather in the report which we have of those sermons, occasionally hints at events in our Lord's life being illustrations of His Temptations.

Bishop Van Mildert also (Sermons, Vol. II. Sermon iv.) suggests the correspondence between the Temptation in the wilderness, and the subsequent trials of Christ.

P. 13, l. 1. It has been suggested to me, that the meaning of this page is not clear. The inherent difficulty, of the coexistence in the same subject of divinity and tentability, is of course not rendered more comprehensible by the fact of Satan having attacked our Lord in ignorance of His true being. What I have intended to express is this, that whereas the attack made upon our Lord as a man can scarcely be conceived to have been attempted, if Satan had really known who He was, we may easily account for the Tempter's conduct by the supposition of his partial ignorance; and this being so, we may consider the attack to have been made (as it really was) upon the human nature of the Lord, and put out of sight for the time the difficulties suggested by

that union of the human and divine, which (as I have said) "at once made the suggestion of evil possible, and the victory over evil sure."

P. 16, l. 14. Was the conversion of S. Paul an exception to what is here stated? The vision by which S. Paul was converted hardly comes under the general description of miracles: so far as a miracle was wrought, he himself was the subject of it; and therefore his conversion, though altogether extraordinary, is not of the same kind as that of an opponent of Christ supposed to be converted by witnessing some wonderful work. I have however stated the conclusion cautiously, as I would by no means desire to deny the possibility of exception to that, which however I am convinced is true as a general rule.

P. 18, last sentence. It has been remarked to me, that the language here used would seem to imply a limitation of the divine power of Christ. I could not of course intend to suggest any absolute defect of power in Him who was God, but I did intend to suggest the difficulty of defining the circumstances under which superhuman power would be exerted, and that perhaps the very notion of a miracle worked for the purpose of convincing an evil spirit, would present to our minds (if we saw things spiritual aright) something like a contradiction in terms.

P. 43, l. 9. The paragraph, "The life of the church of His people," was omitted in the delivery.

P. 50, l. 15. The passage beginning, "Indeed so far," and terminating on page 52, line 14, at the words "before men," was omitted in the delivery.

P. 57, l. 9. The language used in the following lines seems to me to be justified by the Canon of the Council of Trent, which runs thus :

"Quoniam autem Christus redemptor noster corpus suum id, quod sub specie panis offerebat, vere esse dixit, ideo persuasum semper in ecclesia Dei fuit, idque nunc denuo sancta hæc synodus declarat, per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiæ panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri, et totius substantiæ vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus. Quæ conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta catholica ecclesia transubstantiatio est appellata."

Of course the change here described is not one cognizable by the senses ; and those, who (as Chillingworth) make the argument against the doctrine to depend upon such an appeal, clearly waste their time in attacking the Tridentine faith. Thus we read in the Catechism of the Council of Trent :

"Quoniam Apostolus admonet, gravissimum scelus admitti ab iis, 'qui non dijudicant corpus Domini : ' hoc imprimis doceant pastores, animum atque rationem a sensibus omni studio avocandum esse. Si enim fideles ea tantum in hoc sacramento contineri sibi persuaserint, quæ sensibus percipiunt, in summam impietatem adducantur necesse est, quum nihil aliud præter panis et vini speciem oculis, tactu, odoratu, gustu sentientes, panem tantummodo ac vinum in sacramento esse judicaverint. Curandum igitur est, ut fidelium mentes, quam maxime

fieri potest, a sensuum judicio abstrahantur, atque ad immensam Dei virtutem et potentiam contemplandam excitentur.”*

And again :

“ Panis quidem et vini accidentia omnia licet videre, quæ tamen nulli substantiæ inhærent, sed per se ipsa constant; quum panis et vini substantia in ipsum Domini corpus ita mutetur, ut panis et vini substantia omnino esse desinant.”†

It may very well be questioned, whether the scholastic explanation of the accidents of bread and wine remaining without the substance be by any one distinctly conceivable; certainly to people in general it must be totally inconceivable; but, whether or no, the very attempt to apply the definitions of the schools to the holy sacrament, seems to me to have the effect of reducing it from its position as a heavenly mystery to something like the level of a physical miracle.

I am aware that it may be objected to the analogy drawn between the miracle suggested to our Lord in the wilderness and transubstantiation, that in the former case the accidents were to be changed, whereas in the latter the accidents are unchanged while the substance is transmuted. I do not press the analogy: *valeat quantum*: yet I cannot but think, that looking to the manner in which the doctrine of transubstantiation has been practically held, and the results produced by it upon the spiritual life of the Church, a lesson might well have been learned from the miracle of transmutation,

* Cat. ad Par. Pars II. Cap. iv. Quæstio xxv.

† Ibid. Quæstio xxvi.

which Satan considered to be good evidence of the presence of the Son of God.

P. 58, l. 4. The paragraph, "And it is to be remarked.....a lump of wood," was omitted in the delivery.

It is a circumstance worth recording, that in nearly the last lecture delivered in Cambridge by the late Dr Mill, he took occasion, from the words of Hosea iv. 12, "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them," to reprobate in strong language the delusions here referred to.

A very curious instance of the strength of the desire to gain knowledge by supernatural means is to be found in the *Mémoires du duc de Sully*, (*Livre xxii.*) The case is that of a Père Cotton, who, being about to exorcise a demon, made notes of the questions which he desired to have answered before the demon was expelled. The questions are varied and numerous ; the following are amongst them. "Quel est le passage de l'Écriture le plus clair et le plus formel pour prouver le purgatoire et l'invocation des saints, la puissance du pape, et que le nôtre l'a semblable à celle de saint Pierre ; quand les animaux ont bu dans l'arche de Noé ; quels enfans de Dieu ait aimé le filles des hommes ; si le serpent a marché sur ses pieds avant la chute d'Adam ; combien de temps ils ont été au Ciel, et nos pères dans le paradis terrestre ; quels sont les esprits qui sont devant le trône de Dieu ; s'il y a un roi des archanges ; ce qu'il est à propos de faire pour établir une ferme paix avec les Espagnols ; si Dieu veut qu'il m'apprenne quelque chose du temps où l'hérésie de Calvin doit être éteinte ;" &c. &c.

P. 108, l. 17. S. Matthew: ἀνήχθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος.

S. Mark: τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει.

S. Luke: ἦγετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι.

P. 131, l. 4. "Our blessed Saviour, when the 'Spirit led Him into the wilderness,' and He fell to His fast, it is said that 'then the Tempter came to Him;' so we must make reckoning he will to us. It is exceeding behoveful for us to take notice of this, as they say, to know the length of the devil's chain; that neither full nor fasting we are out of his reach, but he will be busy with us in them both. Attends our feasts, to make 'our table a snare;' attends our fasts, 'to turn them,' as well as our prayers, 'into sin.'—BISHOP ANDREWES.

P. 133, l. 3. Every one acquainted with Cambridge is aware, that in common parlance, the epithet *good* frequently refers to the place attained on the Tripos; thus a high wrangler, or a first class classic, would be spoken of as a *good man*.

P. 136, l. 11. Bishop Ken says, (Sermon on the character of Daniel): "I mention this example of Daniel, to shew what the ancients thought of fasting, and how they kept Lent: I do not exhort you to follow them any further than either our climate or our constitutions will bear; but we may easily follow Daniel in abstaining from wine, and from the more pleasurable meats; and such an abstinence as this, with such a mourning for our own sins, and the sins of others, is the proper exercise

of a primitive spirit, during all the weeks of Lent. For what is Lent, in its original institution, but a spiritual conflict to subdue the flesh to the spirit, to beat down our bodies, and to bring them into subjection? What is it but a penitential martyrdom for so many weeks together, which we suffer for our own and others' sins? A devout soul, that is able to observe it, fastens himself to the cross on Ash Wednesday, and hangs crucified by contrition all the Lent long; that having felt in his closet the burden and the anguish, the nails and the thorns, and tasted the gall of his own sins, he may by his own crucifixion be better disposed to be crucified with Christ on Good Friday, and most tenderly to sympathize with all the dolours, and pressures, and anguish, and torments, and desertion, infinite, unknown, and unspeakable, which God incarnate endured, when he bled upon the cross for the sins of the world; that being purified by repentance, and made conformable to Christ crucified, he may offer up a pure oblation at Easter, and feel the power, and the joys, and the triumph of his Saviour's resurrection."

P. 137, l. 18. "I know not how," says Bishop Andrewes in a Sermon upon S. Matt. vi. 16, "but fasting is laid aside, in a manner clean gone; few or none keep it. How is it gone? What is pretended or given out for it? But for fear of doing that which persons do that are superstitiously given, fear of being like them. For no fear of hypocrisy now; *sicut hypocritæ* is now gone. But by this one precedent, this one *ne sitis sicut*, he can make more. As now in place of 'Be not like

hypocrites,' is come a fear of ' Be not like papists ' ; we shall be like papists if we do. And not to fast is made a *supersedeas* to all popery, as if that alone were enough to make us truly reformed. This is all our fear now."

THE END.

FOUR SERMONS

Preached before the University of Cambridge,

DURING THE SEASON OF ADVENT, 1858.

BY

HARVEY GOODWIN, D.D.

DEAN OF ELY.

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SERMON I.

HUMAN FOLLY CORRECTED BY THE ADVENT OF CHRIST.

PSALM xiv. 1, and liii. 1.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

PROBABLY few sayings from the mouth of a wise man have ever become more famous than that, which is here described as the saying of a fool. Twice in a month it is celebrated in the Church service: it is continually read, continually repeated, continually sung and chanted: it takes its place alongside of such passages as that, in which David describes the heavens as declaring the glory of God and the firmament shewing His handywork: the most eminent preachers have made it a text for their sermons, divines have written treatises upon it, philosophers have discussed it and pulled it to pieces and held up the fool's folly for execration, while some have taken the fool's side and maintained that in reality he was no fool: in fact, the saying of the fool, absurd as it may be deemed

philosophically, monstrous as it may be accounted religiously, worthy as it may appear of being at once consigned to oblivion, and disgraceful as it may be to the head and heart of any creature bearing the image of that God whose being is denied, has nevertheless become wide-spread and famous. And if to be famous is to be happy, the fool may be justly reckoned as a happy man : few wise men have become so famous ; few witnesses for the truth have become so well known ; there is no earnest and good man who would not rejoice from the bottom of his heart, if he could ensure for some pithy sentence on the side of God, some emphatic testimony concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, the same, or anything like the same, degree of currency, which has been given to the saying of the fool.

And yet, if the assertion *There is no God* had been the mere gibbering utterance of an idiot, so much attention would hardly have been directed towards it. David would scarcely have given such prominence to a blasphemous speech in the ancient Jewish Church, and (if I may venture with reverence so to speak) the Holy Spirit would not have led him to preserve such a speech as the heritage of the Church throughout all the world, if it had

been remarkable for nothing but its wickedness and its folly. It seems clear from the context that David did not regard the fool as standing alone; passing at once from the charge of folly to that which in Scripture ever stands in close and organic connexion with it, he says, *There is none that doeth good, no not one*; he speaks of the children of men as having *all gone out of the way, altogether become abominable*; he seems depressed by the persuasion that there had been an "eclipse of faith," and that the mass of mankind was on the fool's side; he evidently regards the Atheism of the fool as likely to prove infectious, and as needing for its cure something more than an appeal to reason and common sense. David felt, I suppose, that however obvious it might appear that atheism was folly, still the denial of God was a deep-rooted and wide-spreading disease; he knew that many less important maladies tended towards it, maladies of the life and conduct much more than of the intellect, and that the point-blank negation of God's being, which he represented as the utterance of the fool's heart, was only the limiting case of many ungodly thoughts, which were liable to spring up as rank weeds in the hearts of fallen men. He held up the fool in the text, therefore, not as one

whose folly every one would instinctively execrate, and at whom every one could afford to cast a stone, but rather as one whose speech was dangerous, just because it would find so many prepared to agree with it, and would express an impious thought, which lurked in the hearts of multitudes, and which they only dared not bring forth to the light.

But some may say, What has all this to do with Advent Sunday? Why discuss the folly of those who say, *There is no God*, at a season in which all our thoughts should be directed to Him, who came to visit us in great humility, and in the prospect of whose blessed birth into the world we seem to shrink from any contest with unbelievers, and to desire rather to bask in the sunshine of the Nativity, and to concentrate all our efforts upon the work of adoring the Holy Child? Believe me, Christian brethren, whatever suspicions my text may have raised, I have no intention of diverting your minds from proper Advent thoughts; I appreciate too highly the wisdom of the change lately made with regard to the cycle of University preachers, according to which the seasons of the Church will be no longer ruthlessly broken through and set at nought as heretofore, to permit myself

to forget that this is Advent Sunday, and that it is incumbent upon me to preach an Advent Sermon¹. But what is an Advent Sermon? When I considered this question, I found myself puzzled by the immensity of the answer: the Advent of Christ, especially when regarded (after the example of the services of the day) as taking in at once the coming of Christ in humility by birth of a woman, and the coming of Christ in glory with saints and angels to judge the world, appears so thoroughly to include all that is peculiar to Christians, all that constitutes the Catholic faith, all that we mean when we say that we believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, all the benefits of His cross and passion, all the principles of Christian life in this world, all Christian hopes for the world to come, that it would seem more reasonable

¹ Residents in Cambridge will understand what is meant by this sentence; but for the sake of others, into whose hands these sermons may possibly fall, it should be remarked, that, whereas it has been the rule of the University for more than fifty years to appoint a select Preacher for each *calendar month* from October to May inclusive, the Syndicate with whom the appointment rests are now at liberty to arrange the Preachers for the Academic year in the way which may seem most convenient. Accordingly my own appointment was not for a calendar month, but for the Advent Season. The old system was, as many will remember, the subject of severe comment from the late Dr Mill, in a sermon preached before the University on March 3, 1844.

to ask, What sermon is *not* appropriate for Advent, than What sermon *is*? Certainly if Christ be preached as the Way and the Truth and the Life, if His Name be declared as the only one given under heaven whereby men must be saved, if the union of Godhead and Manhood in His one adorable person be recommended to the faith of mankind as that in which it may securely rest, if His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King be insisted upon and explained, if His person, whether as a new-born child in the cradle or as a dying man upon the Cross, be held up as the proper object of human love, then he who so preaches does virtually declare the Advent of Christ. However imperfect may be the view given of Him, of whom no perfect likeness can be drawn by human hand, still he who preaches Christ does of necessity preach an Advent Sermon; and conversely, I may perhaps venture to add, that he does *not* preach Christ, who does not lead men to think seriously and lovingly of that humble Advent in which He once visited this world, and solemnly of that promised glorious Advent in which He will one day visit us again.

I have chosen my text for this day, then, not in disregard of the Advent season, but because

I have thought that the wisdom of God as displayed in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world might be usefully put in contrast with the folly of man's heart, which says, *There is no God*. The folly spoken of in the text is (so to speak) representative folly: the Atheism, of which the fool was guilty, was nothing peculiar to himself: on the other hand, he only said in his heart that which millions of others have said more or less distinctly; he represented the ignorance of some, and the fear of others, and the guilty wish of many more; and when David wrote the text, he put into the mouth of him whom he describes as *the fool* that which is in reality the characteristic folly of mankind. As the knowledge of God may be said to comprehend all knowledge, so to say, *There is no God*, may be described as comprehending all folly; and as we contemplate the dealings of God with man, we may regard man as continually drawn by the evil bias which his heart has received from sin to the side of folly, and God as continually drawing mankind in an opposite direction to the knowledge of Himself. That which I chiefly desire to do this day is to point to the Advent, as the crown and head of these Providential dealings. I do not intend to

touch upon the hopeless speculation as to the reason why God permitted men, whom He had created in His own image, to fall away from the knowledge of Himself, and to make their lives upon earth, which were intended to be for His honour and glory, become practical denials of His being, and cast a suspicion upon His goodness and wisdom and power; I take the facts as I find them; and perceiving (as every one must perceive) that there is a fearful spiritual disease in the world, which may be described as ignorance of God, I look to the Advent of Christ as the divine remedy for the disease; I adore the infinite love of God, which sent His blessed Son as a man amongst men in order to cure their malady, and to bring them to the knowledge of Himself.

I shall bring this subject before you in two or three different ways.

In the first place, let us take a glance at mankind just as in matter of fact they appear before us by their deeds, or as we read of their doings in times past. We have had abundance of time to make observations; and they have been made under abundantly varying circumstances, in different climates, in the case of different races, under divers conditions of education and civilization: no

one can say that a conclusion drawn at the present period of human history is drawn from insufficient data. And it seems to me that the facts justify these two conclusions ; in the first place, that ignorance of God is a characteristic mark of the natural condition of man; and in the second place, that nothing has successfully contended with this ignorance except the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. I by no means desire to underrate the argument for the being of God, which has been derived from the almost universal sense of the great truth which the history of mankind has exhibited; if we want an argument for the abstract truth of God's being, in aid of the axiomatic character of the truth itself, or in aid of those ingenious trains of reasoning, those arguments from the outward frame of the universe, or from the mind itself, or from any other data, which have been from time to time devised, we cannot have a better one than that which is derived from the general conscience of mankind. On the simple abstract question, Is there or is there not a God? the fool, if he meant to assert the negative, would undoubtedly be in a very small minority. It is true indeed that the confession is not quite universal; it is true that there are languages in which God has no name; it is true that there

are tribes in which there is no appreciable trace of any sense of His being, and people of whom it is difficult to say what they do or do not believe; but these cases are certainly exceptional, and frequently so connected with an observable process of gradual moral degradation, those who themselves know nothing of God having melancholy traditions that their ancestors did know something, that they do little to interfere with the truth of the general assertion, that the acknowledgment of a God, the instinct of looking above us with the heart and mind no less than the power of standing erect and turning the face towards Heaven, is a characteristic mark of humanity. I should be very sorry to underrate this view of the relation in which we stand to God; but it is nevertheless true that the universality of a belief in God is not more remarkable than the universality of the error and darkness by which the idea of God has been depraved. Men have shewn that the fool in the text may to a certain extent be taken as their spokesman, not by endorsing his statement in its bare and literal and (I may add) scarcely intelligible meaning, but by depriving the God in whom they have professed to believe of all godlike qualities, by reducing religion to superstition, and so falling into that condi-

tion of practical ignorance of God and all its accompanying pollutions and evils, which S. Paul describes (in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans) as oppressing the Gentile world. For instance, that polytheism, which in various forms has embodied the religious belief of so many nations, has practically been equivalent to the assertion, *There is no God*; it matters not whether the multiplicity of deities arises from the deification of the powers of nature, or of the sun, moon, and stars, or of kings and heroes, or of philosophical conceptions of the divine attributes, or from any number of these combined; so soon as ever man loses sight of God in His character of Supreme over all, and undertakes to make gods to himself, so soon he virtually denies the being of God, and renders worship impossible; the language of true worship, *It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves*, becomes changed into this, “It is *we* that have made *them*,” and so the hearts of men are degraded to their idols, instead of being lifted up to God. And even when heathen conceptions of God have not sunk into idolatry, they have with rare exceptions gone but a small way towards the formation of an adequate belief in His being. In the nations which have risen to any

degree of civilization we usually find certain men standing out from the crowd, and shewing that they have gained some knowledge of God,—God forbid that we should underrate this knowledge, or think to do honour to the light of Christ by denying the existence of a few tapers here and there;—but this may be affirmed, that such light as these men were able to give had no great penetrating power, it was no Gospel to the poor, it had no broad palpable effect in dispelling that darkness which covered the earth, it supplied for the mass of the people no practical knowledge of God. I am not now discussing the question whether mankind were to be pitied or to be blamed for this darkness; *we* can see in it from our point of view a manifestation of the disease which has oppressed our race since sin came into the world; *we* can find in the opening of the book of Genesis such a solution of the riddle as it has pleased God to give us, and one that abundantly suffices for the guidance of our own feet; *we* can feel sure that He, who came in great humility to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, must, even in the dreariest moments of human ignorance, have pitied our condition, and have been unwilling that any human soul should lose its way in the dark; and *we* therefore can look

forward to a time, when we shall know more than we do now, and when the hints given us here shall be expanded into perfect knowledge, and when the mystery of God's dealings shall be lighted up with the full light of heaven, and be admired by angels and saints. But all the knowledge that we have now, or may have hereafter, can never alter our conclusion concerning the godless condition of the heathen world. On the one side, it is true that there are *gods many and lords many*, intricate mythologies, infinite superstitions, religious rites, sacrifices, priesthoods; and mixed up with these, and standing out in relief against the cruelties and abominations which frequently accompanied them, there are sometimes hints of better things, sounds of Æolian music drawn forth from the chords of men's hearts as they were swept by the breath of God, speculations of thoughtful men concerning the truth which was underlying so many absurdities, guesses concerning the *One* Father of Spirits, the *One* Governor of the world, possibly the *One* Judge of all in a world to come; and yet on the other side it is equally true, that the spiritual condition of those parts of the earth which Christ has not enlightened may be only too accurately described by saying, that for them *there is no*

God:—do you *realize* all this, Christian brethren? do you *feel* the darkness of the heathen world? If you do, you will be prepared to rejoice in the Advent of Christ; because you will perceive, that this was the answer which the wisdom of God gave to human folly, this the true light which God sent to clear away the darkness, this the remedy for human ignorance, which, because He loved the world, our Father in Heaven devised.

But now let us pass to another view of the subject. Hitherto I have been regarding the fool, who said in his heart *There is no God*, as the type of heathen ignorance; and indeed, if, in writing the Psalms from which I have taken my text, David had looked, as perhaps he did, beyond the boundary of the Holy Land, and fixed his eyes upon the abominable false worships and idolatries which flourished all around, he might very well have described the condition of things as a universal denial of God. But he would have no occasion to go so far; he would be able to find abundance of practical atheism amongst his own people; and I should suppose that these unbelievers within the pale of the old covenant would far more deserve the epithet used in the text, and the accusation of wickedness and corruption which that epithet

in Scripture usually implies, than could any of the heathen who were ignorant of God. No one, save the Searcher of all hearts Himself, can tell the degree of guilt belonging to a heathen who says there is no God; but the case is widely different with those to whom God has revealed His being; they who are permitted to know God, and who yet say, *Tush, God cares not, and is there knowledge in the most High?* these are the men upon whom the charge of practical atheism falls with by far the most crushing force. And therefore I will turn away from that view of the world's history, which represents to us the race of mankind wandering in apparently hopeless darkness, to that other view, which exhibits to us the revelations which God has made to mankind for the purpose of leading them to a knowledge of Himself. I will turn from profane history to sacred, and will shew that in the midst of all the confusions of the world the God of order has been at work, and that the refutations which God has vouchsafed at sundry times and in divers manners of the folly of the human heart, have led up to, and culminated in, the grand refutation afforded by the Advent of His most blessed Son. In order to do

this, I must ask you to consider for a few moments the history of man as we find it in Holy Scripture. The history, as we find it there, is not only somewhat different from what we find elsewhere, not only engaged with a particular current of facts which happens not to have been recorded in other books, not merely co-ordinate with or supplementary to other histories, but it is distinct in its essential idea. In other history, God is veiled; in Scripture, God is revealed. In other history, men are seen working and battling for themselves; in Scripture, God is seen leading them by the hand. In other history men say *There is no God*, and there is little of earnest contradiction; in Scripture, the very essence of the history is the series of contradictions, which it has pleased God to give. And so, as I have said, the idea of Scripture history is quite different from that of any other, and as we track its course we may see in it the persistent opposition of human folly and divine wisdom; those are the salient points of the history which are marked by some new Advent of God, some fresh revelation of His person and character and will; *that is the point of points*, which is marked by that Advent of God in hu-

man flesh, in comparison with which all previous revelations of Himself fade away and vanish, as stars at the rising of the sun.

I observe, then, that when God created man in His own image He did not leave him to wander in the dark, or to feel his way up (as some would have us believe) through gross forms of worship to a knowledge of the truth. He did not create man a fool, and expect him by his own efforts to become wise. God came to man, and conversed with him, and declared His own being, and gave a commandment and established a covenant; Scripture commences with an Advent. And as Scripture commences with an Advent, so it proceeds with human folly; Adam was the father of the fool in the text; it was he who first said in his heart *There is no God*. There was of course no abstract question in his mind concerning the reality of God's being, no dry formal Atheism, neither is there any such question in the minds of nine-tenths of those who have followed his example; but there was positive rebellion against Him who had said that rebellion would bring death, and therefore a defiance of His power, and an assertion of practical unbelief. Thus, in the very opening of the struggle, the folly of man seemed to have proved itself

stronger than the wisdom of God; God came to judgment, but the judgment was no cure for sin; Adam and Eve lost Paradise, but their children did not come to the knowledge of God. What a mysteriously dark page is that next in sacred history! the antediluvian world—apparently further gone from God than in the very darkest times since, the fool clearly in a large majority, blurting out his blasphemies against high heaven, Enoch standing almost alone as the representative of wisdom and holiness, *walking with God*, as the Scripture emphatically expresses it, and so assured, by evidence which could not be shaken, that he was right and the majority wrong; the multitude meanwhile growing worse and worse, more thoroughly estranged from God, more thoroughly lost in the pleasures of sin—a fearful page in human history is that of the antediluvian world, but it leads up, and is evidently recorded in such glowing colours for the purpose of leading up, to another Advent of God. It is a double Advent of God, as His Advents will generally be found to be: there is a flood for the ungodly, a covenant for Noah: a revelation of God in wrath, a revelation in mercy: a wild waste of waters, and a bow in the cloud: an Advent which shews that God will not be mocked, and an Advent

which shews that He still loves the world. Will the fool's mouth be now shut for ever? will the children of Noah hold fast to the covenant, and walk with God as their father had walked? These are the questions, which Scripture history has to answer, and to which it gives an answer most unequivocal and most melancholy. We have records of mighty hunters, of workers in brass and iron, of inventors of musical instruments, of founders of cities, and builders of towers; but there is no evidence of the original wound of humanity having been stanch'd, and mankind taught to good purpose that their life consisted in knowing God; and so practical Atheism seems to have become as abundant as ever, and faith well-nigh extinct. In the midst of the darkness the light of God shines again: God calls Abraham, makes a covenant with him and his family, promises that in his seed the world shall be blessed. Henceforth Scripture history is the history of one family: the stream is contracted, but it becomes deeper: God will reveal Himself to this one family, and they are to be a light to the Gentiles: it is the first distinct germ of a Church of God, witnessing for Him in the midst of an unbelieving and naughty world. Will not the folly

which rebels against God be now excluded at least from this Church? shall we not find hereafter at least one patch of consecrated ground, in which the tree of life will grow? We pass over a few hundred years, and we find a gloomy answer to these questions: the old tendency to forget God, and break His covenant, and deny His being, has shewn itself in the chosen family: circumcision seems to have availed nothing, and sacrifices and burnt-offerings have not kept God in mind: God must reveal Himself again; and this time the revelation is made more clearly than ever, and in a manner peculiarly fitted to refute the folly of unbelief; this time the *Name* of God is declared, and it is I AM; the name stands out in sharp contrast with that denial of God which constitutes the ground-sin of human nature: *There is no God*, says the folly of man; I AM, says the wisdom of God. And this new Advent of God was more potent and enduring in its results than any of those which had gone before: the burning bush, from which the Name of God was declared, was the symbol of His presence afterwards; *the bush was not consumed*; it still continued to burn in the desert of the world, throwing out some degree of heat, and being to some extent a source of light; but it

did not thoroughly warm or lighten the world, there was little comfort in it for the Gentiles who stood afar off, it was the shadow of good things to come, the commencement of a dispensation which should in due time vanish away in the light of a more glorious Advent of God. Once again, however, I must ask, was the fool's mouth now shut? shut, I mean, within the limits of the Mosaic Church? Very far from this, as every reader of the Old Testament knows; the old tendency is as strong as ever; polytheism and idolatry have invincible charms, even for those who have heard the Name of the One God; the garbage of heathenism was pleasanter than the bread of God's sanctuary; and that nation, which ought to have been a light in the world and a witness for the Name of God, could scarcely be held back by the denunciations of prophets, and by solemn judgments, from falling into entire apostacy. Nevertheless, the light *was* kept alive; the bush still burned in the desert without being consumed; and when the Canon of the Old Testament closes, and the last prophet describes the disorder of God's Church, the priests leading the people astray and the people following them, our hearts are gladdened with the promise of one Advent more, and that apparently

more glorious in its circumstances and more lasting in its effects than any with which the world has been blest hitherto. There is a blank of four hundred years, like the four hundred years of captivity in Egypt, and then God does come again : this is emphatically *The Advent*, this is the coming of God in human flesh : to the eye of faith more glorious in its circumstances than any other revelation of God, glorious from its very humility, glorious because it so thoroughly surpasses all human imagination, and so thoroughly humbles all human pride. What will the fool say now ? Alas, alas, even the coming of God in human flesh is not sufficient to expel all folly ; it would be false to say that the light of Christ has expelled all darkness, and our own hearts would condemn us if we said that there was now no danger of unbelief ; but this we may say, that to the eye of faith the humble Advent of Christ in human flesh is so transcendently glorious, and to the calm thoughtful religious mind it so brings God near to us and satisfies all human wants, and to the simple-hearted man it is so completely a light in the darkness, and moreover it has so demonstrated its power by breaking down idolatry and reforming many of the rooted errors of the human heart, and bringing into the

bondage of willing obedience the thoughts of the wise and good, that we at least can have no difficulty in acknowledging the Advent of our blessed Lord as the great answer to the folly of the human heart, and the grandest demonstration that ever this earth received of the wisdom and power of God.

There is one more view of the subject which I wish to bring under your notice. I have spoken hitherto of the fool's speech in the text as representative of heathen ignorance of God, and of those ungodly tendencies of the human heart, of which Scripture gives us the picture, and of which it describes God's own remedies. Both of these views are valuable; but they yield perhaps in practical importance to another, which brings the text nearer home to us, and puts it in closer connexion with our own spiritual lives. I have already acknowledged that the coming of God in human flesh, well adapted as it appears to be to the purpose for which God designed it, and well deserving as it is of the name by which we describe it when we call it "The Gospel," or good news to a sinful world, has nevertheless not expelled all human folly or brought all men to join heartily in the confession, "I believe in God." There is manifestly much practical ungodliness in

the world, and there is a tendency to ungodliness in every human heart, and the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ has an important bearing upon both the one and the other. There is practical ungodliness in the world: there is abundance of echo, sometimes ignorant and sometimes vicious, of the fool's profession of unbelief. To take one extreme, there is the heathen world still in ignorance of God; an absolute majority of the whole human race unchristened, the powers of Satan not perhaps so rampant and unchecked as they were, but still far more powerful than they ought to be in the 19th century after the Advent of Christ. What is all this to us? The Advent of Christ, Christian brethren, has forbidden us to ask such a question: it is everything to us, even as the ignorance of the world and the sinfulness of the world and its slavery under the power of the devil were everything to the heart of Him, who came to redeem and save it. The Advent of Christ has forbidden us to listen in a calm sense of our superiority to heathen denials of God, and to content ourselves with saying to our brother *Thou fool*. The Advent of Christ has by its very nature rendered it necessary that it should be preached to the world, and that all men should hear that God has

loved them and sent His Son to redeem them. Nor can we say less of atheism and ungodliness nearer home: I have no desire to guess how much of these exist, but beyond doubt they are rank as weeds usually are: much speculative infidelity, much unholiness of life: many professing themselves wise and becoming fools, many living without God in the world, and many only abstaining from saying *There is no God*, because they think it not worth while to trouble themselves to say anything about the matter at all. What is all this to us? Again I say, that the Advent of Christ has forbidden us to ask such a question. When the fire is near our own house, it might be dangerous to ignore the flame and smoke on other grounds; but even if this were not so, and if we could afford to look on without fear of mischief, the Advent of Christ forbids us. He came to seek and save what was lost; and those who have been found by Him are bound over to assist in finding others. And what I especially wish to enforce is this, that we have in the news of the Advent of Christ a standing-place from which the world may be moved: standing by His cradle we have seen Satan fall as lightning from heaven; rejoicing in all that the birth of Christ implies, we know, or

ought to know, that we have power over all the malice of the enemy, and that nothing can in any wise harm us. Are there not many here, whose office it will one day be to stem the torrent of practical ungodliness, and to cleanse the pool of human ignorance, and (it may be) to withstand barefaced denials of God? Depend upon it, young Christian brethren, that in performing this your noble and most honourable and most Christ-like work, you will find your true strength in a complete knowledge, and a faithful exposition, of that mystery of mysteries which has given its name to this day: if anything will stir the human heart, this will do it: if anything will shut the fool's mouth, this will do it: if anything will make a man wise unto salvation and enable him by God's grace to make others wise as well, it is faith in that coming of God in the flesh which this day declares.

But this is not all. There is, as I have said, and as you will all concede, a tendency to ungodliness in the human heart: we cannot look upon the evils which we see, either at a distance from home, or near home, from a high pinnacle of purity raised above all danger. Who dare cast the first stone at the fool in the text?—who dare cast the

first stone at the fool? The woolly head and the thick lips and the black skin of the African do not cut him off from the bond of brotherhood; and so likewise it would be rash for any one to deny his brotherhood to him, who degraded himself by saying *There is no God*. Two ways there are, upon neither of which it is necessary for me to dwell at length, in which the tendency to ungodliness may shew itself: there is the tendency to speculative infidelity, and there is the tendency to practical sin: one man is tempted more in one direction and one in the other, but they are both in an especial manner tendencies of the young, and they are both tendencies which must be checked by a knowledge of the Advent of Christ. With regard to speculative infidelity I would merely remark, that the species, which is likely (if any) to lay hold of young men of education in our own days, is one which is specially met and confuted by a full view of the Advent. I do not think that men are likely to be tried in these days by temptations to blank atheism: the fool has said all he has to say upon that view of his denial of God, and his folly is pretty generally admitted: neither is a man likely to be tempted by the scoffing, sneering, shallow, and (I may add) unscientific and

unscholarlike infidelity of the last century: that which *will* try him is the form of unbelief which admits much and will not admit all, which speaks with respect of our blessed Lord, and then insults Him by speaking in the same breath with equal respect of some of His servants who would have declared themselves unworthy to stoop down and unloose His shoes, which pretends to patronize Christianity as having been useful in its time, but as being now outgrown and gone by, and not adequate to become the universal religion of the 19th century. If any one *be* thus tried, my advice to him would be this: bring the pretensions of those who support such views face to face with the Advent of Christ. What can they give you, if they deprive you of *that*? What amount of spiritualism, or anything else, will fill the void occasioned by the loss of faith in the grand objective reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God? What foundation in fact can you find for your lives in this world, and your hopes in another, like that which God Himself has laid in the Advent of His most blessed Son?

And lastly, as I have said, there is a tendency to practical sin. Oh! how I would pray God to enable me to impress this truism it may be, but

still most portentous truism, upon the hearts of some of those who are listening to me. I have no intention just now of speaking concerning the peculiar temptations of this place; neither is it necessary for me to describe what has been described a thousand times, namely, the downward course, the *facilis descensus*, by which a man first forgets his father and his mother, and then his Bible and his prayers, and then falls into one kind of dissipation and then into another, until he dares not look his own conscience in the face, and shrinks from any thought of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, and finally hides himself behind the skirts of the fool, and says *There is no God*. All this I leave to you to supply; that which my subject leads me to say is this, that I would recommend any one who fears the temptations of sin, and who has not yet yielded himself up as a bond-slave to it, to regard himself and his temptations in the light which the Advent has thrown upon them. Let him say to himself, as the priest says to one who wishes to be baptized, “Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ?” Let him consider why Christ came in human flesh, what mighty bars of hell they must have been which it required *Him* to loosen, what manner of love that

of the Father must have been which sent His only-begotten Son into the world. Let him contemplate the cradle of Christ, and the cross to which the cradle led Him, and then let him see whether there be any sin so sweet that it will be worthy of being enjoyed.

Yes: this is the way to deal with temptations to sin; this is the way to curb the folly which denies the being of a God, who judges all men according to their works. I might point your attention (after the example of this day's Collect) to the future Advent of Christ in glory; I might try to scare a man from sin by the prospect of the terrible day of account; I might say, *We must all stand before the judgment-seat*, when Christ comes again; and I might ask, *Who can abide the day of His coming?* and, if we do look for this coming of the Lord, *what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* This would be a just and lawful and scriptural view, and one which it would be very foolish to neglect; but I question whether any prospect of an Advent to come is so effective as the retrospect of that Advent of which the Gospels teach us. Come to Bethlehem. Look at the babe bound in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. Listen to

its infant cries; and then ask, in the language of this day's Gospel, *Who is this?* It is the image of the Invisible God, the eternal and only-begotten Son. He is come in great humility to put away sin, to reconcile man to God, to set us free from the bondage of the devil and enable us to serve God in perfect freedom. It is even *He*.

Let the fool's tongue be hushed for ever; and let those who have sinned think upon this wonderful humiliation of the Son of God, and pray for grace to go and sin no more.

SERMON II.

THE POWER OF FAITH IN THE ADVENT OF CHRIST.

I. S. JOHN V. 20, 21.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

WE are all familiar with the story, which S. Jerome has preserved, of the last days of S. John the Apostle at Ephesus. He tells us, that when, in extreme old age, S. John was carried to the Church by his disciples, and when his infirmities withheld him from much speaking, he contented himself with these words, "Little children, love one another:" and when his disciples and the rest of the brethren asked him, "Master, why do you always repeat this lesson?" he replied by a sentence, which Jerome characterizes as worthy of S. John, "Because it is the Lord's command; and if that be done, all is done." *Quia præceptum Domini est; et si solum fiat, sufficit.*

This story may be said, I think, to embody the popular conception of S. John's character. When he is represented to us in pictures, it is with a youthful face of extreme loveliness, having in it nothing of sternness, little of strong purpose and determination, suggesting to our minds the thought of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who at the last Supper was the nearest to His bosom, rather than the recollection of the Son of Thunder who wished to call down fire from heaven. And when we think of S. John, our own minds almost instinctively supply the same kind of picture; we seem to be honouring the Lord Himself, when we attribute all that is gentle and lovely to the character of him, whom the Lord emphatically *loved*, and to whose filial care He commended the Virgin Mother from the cross.

Possibly in this, as in many other instances, the instinct (if I may so term it) of the Christian Church has come to a right conclusion. The story of Jerome may possibly represent the condition of feeling and character, to which during his long waiting for the Lord S. John had been gradually approximating. That name which our Lord gave to the two sons of Zebedee, and which seemed to imply an impetuous disposition, was lost by the

elder of them through his early death; and it may have worn off from the other and been forgotten, or have remained (as it does) a mere passing shadow upon the page of Evangelical history, because he had lived in the service of Christ until his Master's character had swallowed up his own. And so it may be right to regard S. John chiefly as the Apostle of love, and to consider that the often repeated injunction at Ephesus conveys the true picture of ripe Christian character, and points out to us the prize of our high calling, and the aim which we ought to have in view as expectant heirs of heaven.

Moreover, the chapter preceding that from which I have taken my text contains a number of precepts concerning loving one another, which harmonize admirably well with the story of S. John at Ephesus. We read in it such passages as this, *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* And again, in a somewhat sterner tone, *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* Here we find all the importance possible assigned to the precept of brotherly love; it is con-

nected with the deepest views of religion; it is declared impossible, that there should be any real piety towards God in heaven, when there is no real love towards our brethren upon earth.

And yet, Christian brethren, if any one wished to support the notion of Christianity being *merely* the teaching of benevolence and brotherly love, if he should wish to interpret the words, *si solum fiat sufficit*, in an absolute manner, as exclusive of all creeds and dogmatic theology, if he should think to establish a plain rational unobjectionable religion for mankind by reducing the whole of the Gospel to the one command which our Lord gave His disciples, forgetting the words which chiefly made it new—as *I have loved you*—words, which at once lift the command of brotherly love high above any position which it ever occupied before, and introduce the thought of the Saviour's *own* love, *His* advent in great humility, *His* poverty, *His* sufferings, *His* death for us men and our salvation—if, I say, any one should wish to take this imperfect and practically most inoperative view of the Gospel, could he support himself upon the example and teaching of S. John? If he looked to ecclesiastical tradition, which has preserved to us that beautiful story of the Apostle's old age,

already quoted, he would perceive that the same source of information supplies us with another story equally familiar to our minds: I mean that of S. John rushing from the bath, because he found there Cerinthus the heretic, and because he feared lest the roof should fall from a building, which contained one who held blasphemous views concerning the person of Christ. Or if he examined that chapter in S. John's writings which chiefly speaks of brotherly love (the 4th chapter of his first Epistle, from which I have already quoted two verses), he would perceive that even there the doctrine of brotherly love is propounded in a manner very different from any which would have been assigned to it by one who was afraid of Creeds and dogmatic theology. *He that loveth not, says S. John, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* And again, *We love Him, because He first loved us.* So that even in that portion of his writings, in which S. John says most of the practical duty of

loving each other, in which he chiefly expounds the new commandment of his Master, he goes down for his arguments to the very depths of Christian divinity. S. John knew that there was no foundation in human nature and in human motives deep enough and solid enough to bear the superstructure of brotherly love; he knew that however men may talk about benevolence and charity, still self is the ruling principle of the human heart; he knew that it was useless to say beautiful things concerning the elevating character of brotherly love; nay, he could not be content with that magnificent declaration, *He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love*,—it was necessary to go beyond even such a declaration as this, which men might resolve into a philosophical abstraction and so make it inoperative as a principle of daily life; it was necessary to put forward that which was the manifestation and proof of God's love, namely, the mission of His only-begotten Son; it was necessary to draw that most important distinction between *our* love towards *God* and *God's* love towards *us*, to assert the love of God, evidenced in the sending of His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, as the fountal source of our love towards Him and of all real love towards one another. And thus any one, who

should quote this chapter of S. John as exalting brotherly love beyond dogmatic theology, would find himself committed to doctrines concerning the person and work of our blessed Lord, which would be entirely destructive of his theory.

Nor would a person, holding the views which I am now supposing, have any better success with other parts of S. John's writings. If he took up the Gospel, he would find it from the very first verse soaring upon eagle's plumes to the highest heaven of divine truth. If he continued his study, and compared S. John's record of the life of Jesus Christ with the other three, which by God's providence we possess, he would be compelled to confess that it was by far the most profound in its mysterious character, remarkable chiefly for the additions made by it to already existing records in the department of hard sayings which some of the disciples found it difficult to bear, and intimations of doctrines which puzzled those to whom they were spoken, and conversations with the apostles which they were to understand more perfectly when the Holy Spirit had enlightened their minds. Nothing could be more unmanageable to one who conceived of S. John as the mere teacher of brotherly love than his own Gospel; the beginning, the middle,

and the end, alike upset the theory; while they are all in harmony with the spirit, which dictated the first and principal Epistle. In the Gospel we find S. John as an historian, in the Epistle as a teacher; and his style in the two is the same. As he commenced his Gospel with announcements concerning the Divine Word, so he opens his Epistle in the same fashion; that which he is most anxious to impress seems to be, not the duty of brotherly love or any other duty, but the fact that he and others had *seen and heard and handled the Word of life*: the thoughts with which he seems chiefly to labour are such as these, the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, the power of faith in the Son of God; and when he closes his Epistle it is with the practical precept, *keep yourselves from idols*, founded upon the grand article of his Creed, *we know that the Son of God is come*. And if, once more, we pass to the book of Revelation, different as the book is in its whole idea from either the Gospel or the Epistle, we still find the dogmas of the Christian faith standing out in principal prominence: the vision of Christ is that of Him *who was dead and who lived again*, and had received *the keys of death and of hell*: the prophecy with which it opens is, *Behold He cometh*

with clouds; the aspiration with which it concludes is, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*. Perhaps, however, a person examining S. John's writings with especial reference to his character as the preacher of love, would hardly expect to find much to his purpose in the Book of Revelation; he would say that that book was professedly not a practical book, that it was a book of vision and prophecy, that you would hardly expect to find in such a book precepts concerning loving one another; and therefore I lay no great stress upon it; I only remark, that it is not inconsistent with the Gospel and the Epistle, that it does not take away from the character which these two would compel us to assign to S. John as a great teacher of dogmatic theology, that it is in its whole tone consistent with what we might expect from the pen of one, who *knew that the Son of God was come*, and who, in the Spirit on the Lord's day, was permitted to see something of those things which should be hereafter, before the Son of God should come again.

The fact is, as I believe, Christian brethren, and as I would desire to suggest to you,—the fact is, that the character of S. John as a teacher of divine truth, and a chief missionary of that Gospel which his divine Master entrusted to His apostles,

is to be found, not so much in S. Jerome's touching picture of the aged Bishop in the Church at Ephesus, as in the testimony which he has himself borne to his own views, and specially in those last words of his Epistle which I have chosen for my text to-day. I take S. John as confessedly one of the brightest examples of what Christians should be, and of what the faith of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost are able to do ; I know that he was the disciple whom Jesus chiefly loved, and who therefore may be supposed to have exhibited in the brightest manner those qualities which the mind of Christ approved ; I feel sure that if we do not find the true *imitatio Christi* for which saints have sighed in the life of S. John, it must be hopeless to look for it elsewhere ; and regarded aright I rejoice in the legend of S. John at Ephesus, as exhibiting the ripe fruit of a tree planted in good ground ; I see doctrine converted into practice, the essentially Christian character of mind shining out more gloriously in the quiet evening of life than ever before, like the sun setting in majesty, the principle of love swallowing up all other principles and declared to contain them all ; but, when I want an explanation of this, when I say, how did S. John acquire his wisdom, how did his character become

so beautiful, how did he gain such an influence over his disciples, how did he secure his position as one of the main pillars of the Church, I find the answer in the consideration of those facts, which he who regards S. John as a mere teacher of brotherly love would be compelled to disregard. I perceive that S. John was a great practical teacher, because, in the words of the text, he *knew that the Son of God was come*.

Now let me examine the text more particularly, regarded as an expression of S. John's faith, and of the principle, upon which his practical life was built, and to which he looked as the safeguard from idols and the ground of Christian practice in his children. It is a true Advent text. Last Sunday I was compelled to apologize in a certain degree for the choice of my text, or rather to explain why I had chosen it; to-day I have no occasion to explain or apologize; the text speaks for itself. When we celebrate the Advent of Christ, we cannot possibly say anything better than this, *We know that the Son of God is come*. All that I have to do is to explain the particular view which I desire to take of the text; and this can be done best by observing the conclusions, which S. John himself drew from his knowledge of the Advent of the Son of God.

S. John says, *We know that the Son of God is come*; and the conviction that he had made no mistake as to this cardinal truth is to be regarded as the ground of two other convictions, which he had expressed just before: he says, *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not*; *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*; and *We know that the Son of God is come*. We know—that is, we who have seen and heard and handled Him who is the Word of Life, and they who have received our testimony concerning Him,—we know of a surety, that we are brought into close union with God, that our spirits are in communion with the Father of spirits, that our minds are enlightened by the source of all light, that our bondage to sin is broken, and that we are able to walk in the perfect liberty of the children of God, *because we know that the Son of God is come*. We are sure of the love of God towards us in all that most deeply concerns our spirits' health; we have peace with God in this world, and a sure and certain hope of peace in the world to come, not in virtue of any fanciful persuasion growing out of the soil of our own imagination, not upon any merely subjective grounds, but because we believe in the great objective fact

of the Advent of the Son of God. And pray observe, that, if there be any passage of Scripture in which we feel compelled at once to eschew any inferior meaning of the phrase *the Son of God*, if there be any passage concerning which we can affirm that the adoption of an Arian or semi-Arian or in any way defective interpretation of the title evacuates the passage of its meaning, the text is such a passage. Often as S. John speaks of *children of God*, and of the privilege of having been made His children, he never drops a phrase which is capable of confusing the character of us who are children, and of Him who is *the Son*. This Son of God has *given us understanding*; He did not *bear witness of the light*, but *was the light* Himself. Through Him, S. John tells us, we know *Him that is true*, τὸν ἀληθινόν; and not only so, we are *in Him that is true*, ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, because we are *in His Son Jesus Christ*. I do not now endeavour to measure the meaning of the phrase being *in God*; but I am sure that it must imply the closest connexion between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, and I observe that however close that connexion may be, it is represented by S. John as equivalent to and measured by that connexion which is implied in the other phrase, being *in Jesus*

Christ His Son. And thus the exegesis of S. John's words seems abundantly sufficient to establish them in their fullest Catholic sense, without the aid of any reflected light from the Nicene Creed. I do not press the words, *This is the true God and eternal life*, as being a formal assertion of the Lord's divinity, because it appears to be the opinion of those best qualified to judge that the words will not support the interpretation; but regarding these words, the strength and emphasis of which I need not point out, and concerning which it is superfluous to argue that they must have a very deep significance,—regarding these words (I say) as asserting that in what S. John has just been putting on record, in this his closing testimony to the Advent of the Son of God, is to be found the revelation of the true God and of eternal life, it seems impossible to give to that Advent any lower meaning than that, which the formal decision of Church Councils and the general conscience of Christians have determined to be the true one. It is the coming of *One who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, of *One who in the eternal purpose and no less eternal love of God so anticipated the ruin of the human race as to be called the Lamb slain from the foun-*

dation of the world, of One whose coming was hinted to our first parents as soon as they had sinned, of One whose day patriarchs longed to see and in a certain sense saw and of whom sacrifices testified and prophets prophesied, of One in the throes of whose marvellous birth all creation groaned, of One who was in the darkest times the Light of the world, and the unsuspected source of many gleams which cheered the long night of heathendom, and the ground of hope to fallen humanity when hope seemed most likely to perish. *Who is this that cometh?* said the prophet, *this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?* it is one mighty to save, because it is the Son of God. Doubtless the external circumstances of the coming are different from what we might have expected them to be; the form of a servant is not that which we should have expected Him who was in the form of God to have assumed; the manger of Bethlehem, the swaddling-clothes, all the external circumstances of the birth, are strange, and are likely to be to some a stumbling-block and to others foolishness; and yet they are but the first step to the cross; the shame of poverty will be all forgotten in the shame of death between two thieves;—nevertheless this is *He*; this

is He who has given us understanding that we may know Him that is true; this is He who has given us that true knowledge, which is eternal life; and as we contemplate all the circumstances of simplicity and humility which mark the birth of Jesus Christ, we say, in the language of S. John and in the spirit of faith and gratitude, *We know that the Son of God is come.*

S. John *knew* that the Son of God was come, and was come not only as the fulfilment of all the history of the world past, but also as the centre of all its history for the future. He remembered, doubtless, those parting words, *Behold, I am with you always*, which proved that having once come He was come for ever, and that He would not leave His Church comfortless, but be present with it by His Holy Spirit until He should Himself come again in glory. With such a conviction on his mind, does it not cause us some surprise that the Apostle should terminate his Epistle in the manner in which he has terminated it? I think we should have expected, that, having enunciated his faith in the Advent of the Son of God, and declared that that Advent was the source of all human knowledge, that it was the means by which men were brought into communion with Him who

is true, that it was in fact the revelation of the true God and of eternal life, he would either have stopped here as having arrived at the summit of divinity, or else would have gone forward to expound some of the future consequences and the glorious hopes depending upon the Advent of Christ: and I think that we should *not* have expected that he would have given the abrupt precept, *Little children, keep yourselves from idols*, and so have brought his Epistle to a close. But I think also, that on further reflection we shall perceive that S. John did in reality shew the depth and the soundness of his faith by bringing it to bear upon the practical difficulties and dangers of the lives of those to whom he was writing. He was writing to those who were encompassed by idolatry, whose great temptation it was to fall away from the true God, and to be swallowed up in the false worships which surrounded them: if the Advent of the Son of God was a truth such as S. John represented it to be, here was proof of it: Isaiah, in the spirit of prophecy, had spoken of Christ as the abolisher of idols—the idols *He shall utterly abolish*—would the knowledge of Christ do this? would it shew that, however Jews might stumble and Greeks scoff at it, still it had the power of lifting men out of the

degradation of idolatry, and of teaching them to worship God in spirit and in truth? would it shew its power, not merely by argumentative triumph in the schools, but by exerting a practical influence over the market-place and the shop and the homes of simple people, and making it impossible for them, when they had once recognized Christ as the image of God, to bow their heads to any other image, which the hand of man could make? This would be a plain practical test, which would tell upon society; if the idols did fall before Christians, men would confess that God was with them of a truth; and if contrariwise the idols succeeded in gaining the object of Christian worship as a new member of their foul fraternity, then it would be only probable in the minds of the multitude that the Christian religion was merely one more form of worship, and not the knowledge of the one true God. Hence the precept of S. John had a wider stretch than might at first sight appear; and when he bid even the little children to keep themselves from idols, he did in reality suggest the best practical test possible of the truth of what he affirmed. What was the result of the application of the test? The enemies of the faith themselves applied the test, and we have the result on record: the Advent of the Son

of God *did* abolish idols; it not only abolished them, in the sense of gradually uprooting their worship, and converting the Roman empire to the faith of Christ, and giving over the idol-temples to the service of the Christian Church; but it uprooted at once the worship of idols from the hearts of those, who had been born again, and become little children in Christ; to them *old things had passed away, and all things become new*; when they had put on Christ, had been baptized into His Name, had been admitted into communion with God through Him, they felt that idols were *nothing in the world*, and that they *could* only worship the one true God. The heathen accounted their lives madness,—why *not* sacrifice? why not hail the Emperor as divine? why not sprinkle a little incense? why not for peace and quietness' sake, and for their own lives' sake, make a small concession to the established religion of the country, and worship Christ if they pleased, but worship something else besides? They could not do this, because they *knew that the Son of God was come*; however strange and unreasonable their conduct might seem, they felt that they were not their own, but bought with a price, and bound by chains, from which they could not get free, and which would not permit them to do as the heathen

did. We all remember the story of Polycarp, which may be taken as a sample of the stories of a thousand less notable martyrs, and which, inasmuch as he was himself a disciple of S. John, forms a very striking commentary upon the Apostle's concluding charge. "Swear by the fortune of Cæsar," said the proconsul, "and I will set thee at liberty. Deny Christ." Polycarp replied: "Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and He has never done me wrong; how then *can* I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" Here was the language of one, who *could* not do what was required of him to save his life, because he *knew that the Son of God was come*.

Christian brethren, I would desire to give to the reflections, which I am permitted to offer you at this season, the same kind of practical bearing, as that which was given by S. John to his declaration of the Advent of Christ. The emphatic words in which S. John announces the knowledge, which he and the whole Church had of the great mystery of godliness, contain, if interpreted in all the breadth which belongs to them, the whole of our knowledge as Christians. When we are admitted into union with God by Holy Baptism, and made members of Christ, children of God, and

inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven, we claim the boon, and we are sure that it is a mighty reality that we claim, because *we know that the Son of God is come*. When we kneel down in prayer to God, and acknowledge our sins, and groan under a sense of our infirmities, we *hope* that God will hear us, because we believe that God is love, but we are *sure* that He *does* hear us, because He has manifested His love by sending His only-begotten Son. When we look upon the mysteries of God's government, and feel inclined to fancy that all the foundations of the earth must be out of course, and are oppressed by the riddle of human life, we seek relief, and find it, in the light which has shined upon the world from the face of Jesus Christ. When our souls long for more intimate union with our Father in Heaven than they can find in the ordinary pathway of work and duty, or in the ordinary modes of access to the throne of grace, we are able to gain the privilege in that most holy sacrament of Communion, which conveys to us the body and blood of Christ; we are able to strengthen and refresh our souls in those holy mysteries, because Christ came into the world in human flesh, and in human flesh died for sin; and in the solemn hour of departure out of this present world, and

the prospect of standing alone before God, when other knowledge fails us, or proves itself unequal to our souls' wants, we can still rest securely upon the knowledge that *the Son of God is come*. I repeat, therefore, that the emphatic words of S. John, if interpreted in all their breadth, contain the whole of our knowledge as Christians. One man may take this view of the Gospel, and another may take that, but the truth which underlies all views, and which rightly apprehended makes all partial views impossible, is this, that *the Son of God is come*. This is truly "articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ;" and I may add, that not only Churches, but human souls also, stand or fall, according as they do or do not hold fast this cardinal truth of the Advent of the Son of God. I venture, then, to ask of those who come here for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, do you know *this*? is it emphatically that which you *do* know, the truth upon which your souls live, the truth by which your actions are ruled? Other knowledge is good, but this is indispensable. Oh, believe me, it is a position of fearful practical danger in which a young man is placed, who has to battle with all the temptations which beset a young man's path, and who does not know that *the Son of God is come*.

I speak of the knowledge just now in its bearing upon the life, in the effect which it will have in keeping a man near to God and in the ways of holiness and the paths of peace, in the influence which it will produce upon the whole tone of his conduct, in the power which it will assert of casting down all idols, and clearing away all that stands between his soul and heaven. I say of casting down all *idols*; because, though in a certain sense idols have been abolished, and in that sense the precept of S. John may be regarded as out of date, still in another and broader sense it may be affirmed, that however completely idols may be abolished from the external worship of mankind, the root of idolatry, the tendency to put something in the place of God, the tendency to allow the mind to be deluded by phantoms, can never be cut up entirely from the human heart, but will ever exist below the surface, and throw out its shoots whenever the conditions are favourable to its growth. And regarding idols thus we may perhaps distinguish the hindrances to the knowledge of God, by which the soul is perplexed and from which it can only get free through the knowledge of the Advent of Christ, in the same way as Bacon has distinguished the idols or phan-

toms which interfere with human knowledge. We have been told by the latest and best editor of Bacon, that the term idol is used by him "in antithesis to idea," and does not mean a false object of worship¹; but when the same editor describes the doctrine of idols as "an attempt to classify according to their origin false and ill defined notions by which the mind is commonly beset," we perceive that the investigation of the sources of error in knowledge is analogous to the investigation of the sources of idolatry in religion. Idols of the tribe, idols of the cave, idols of the market-place, idols of the theatre,—such are the idols from which the father of modern science would have his little children to keep themselves, if they would know the truth. By idols of the *tribe* he means those errors and false conceptions which have their origin in human nature itself: "the human mind," he tells us, "is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolours the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it." What change do we need in this description, in order to make it express that natural ignorance of God, which distorts all the indications that God has

¹ Preface to Bacon's *Novum Organum*, by Robert Leslie Ellis, late Fellow of Trinity College.

given of His character and will, which has assumed sometimes the form of idolatry, sometimes that of indifference, sometimes that of Atheism, and which only the knowledge of the Advent of the Son of God can cure? By idols of the *cave* he means those sources of error which belong to individual men, those which arise from the peculiar constitution of the individual mind, its early habits and the like. Are there no such sources of error in the matter of religion? rather have we not most truly, as Bacon expresses it, each one “a den or cave of his own?” sometimes, it may be, a very dark and comfortless cave, into which the light of heaven that appears to bless all the country without, breaking upon the hill-tops, and causing the valleys to shout for joy and sing, will not or cannot enter? Is it not often brought home to the heart of every one of us, that, although he is one of millions, still in the truest sense he has to bear his own burden, and fight his own enemies, and seek peace for his own soul, and say on his own account, *I know that the Son of God is come?* And if in this sense there be idols of the cave, from which each child of God must keep himself, are there not also idols of the *market-place*—false notions and conceptions, that is, which arise from the intercourse of men

with each other, notions and conceptions, it may be, of which in his own cave a man is ashamed, but which seem to be respectable and tenable when they are passed from mouth to mouth, and admitted into good society as decent and right? And once more, when Bacon concludes his catalogue with idols of the *theatre*, by which expression he tells us that he means those hindrances to the knowledge of the truth, which have immigrated into men's minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, hindrances which arise from the fact that many ingenious men have gone wrong before us, and that when an ingenious man goes wrong he leaves science in a worse plight than he found it, making it necessary for some man wiser and stronger than himself to clear away the errors to which *he* has given currency, do we not perceive that the same kind of description may be used in order to close the catalogue of the ordinary hindrances to the knowledge of God? Each successive scheme of infidel philosophy, each successive device for getting rid of the great fact of a revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ, has been an idol of the theatre, according to Bacon's phraseology, which, so long as it has lasted, has stood between many souls and God, and which it

has been the work of God's servants to clear away. I need not say how many idols of this kind there have been in modern times; I need not say, that there are such now, as there ever have been; I need not say, that in a place of intellectual activity these idols are as dangerous as any on the list: but what I do wish to say is this, that the escape from all idols, whether they spring out of the common nature of us all, or out of our own idiosyncrasies, or out of intercourse with our fellow-men, or out of the ingenious speculations which we chiefly find in books, is to be sought in the recognition of the simple but omnipotent truth, that *the Son of God is come*. These idols are all phantoms, all *ignes fatui*; they simply obscure God, simply lead us astray, they have no power of teaching us that which we most want to know, they have no power of bringing heaven before our eyes: but God has not left us to wander, He has sent a light into the world, He has sent His own Son in human flesh: look at *Him*, who was born of a woman, and spoke to men with human voice, and healed their infirmities, and cast out devils, and died and was buried, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven: hear *Him* say, *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; Come*

unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Here is the deliverance from phantoms, for this is the Son of God Himself.

Believe me, Christian brethren, the true escape from all such idols as those of which I have been speaking, is to be found in the simple recognition of Christ as the power and wisdom of God. There is a light emanating from the child whom God has given us, which (as in Correggio's famous picture) illuminates the dark night in which Christ is born. I do not wish to confine your attention to the birth, I do not wish to steal one thought from the still more mysterious cross; but in this season of preface to the Nativity, I feel constrained rather to look to the entrance of Christ upon His scene of human labours, to regard that entrance as containing the germ of the whole dispensation, to find in the humble birth the pledge of the death for our sins, and the rising again for our justification. Regarding the Advent thus, I say that it is the true safeguard from idols. We cannot worship the false, because we have found the true. And I wish in concluding this sermon to give to this application of the text a further extension: I have already spoken of the Son of God as the

destroyer of idols, in the sense in which Bacon uses the term when he speaks of hindrances to knowledge; idol in antithesis to idea; Christ the express image of the Father, conveying to men the true idea of God. But I need not take the word idol in this more refined sense: we read of men setting up idols in their hearts in the days of Ezekiel, and then coming to inquire of God; and the simplest man in an ordinary Christian congregation, who has studied the workings of his own heart and the dangers by which his life is beset, knows that the sin of idolatry has not passed away because the worship of images is no more; he knows that the first and second commandments, though chiefly dead in this country in the letter, are not dead in the spirit, that there is ever a tendency to worship something which is not God, to love something better than Him, to deny to God the whole devotion of our hearts, and endeavour at least to serve two masters, if we dare not entirely leave the service of that *One* to whom it is due. What are your idols, Christian brethren? Are there any of you, who are loving pleasure more than God? Are there any of you, who are loving earthly honours more than God? Are there any of you, who are loving the distinction of birth and family more than God?

Are there any of you, who are loving books and study, dearly as they ought to be loved,—are you loving them more than God? In fact, are there any of you who are seeking the world first and the kingdom of heaven afterwards, setting up self in any one of its Protean forms in the shrine of your hearts, and there doing homage to it as the Supreme Good? If there be none in this congregation, whose consciences bring them in guilty in answer to such questions as these—and how can this be so?—but if there *be* none, still of this I am sure, that there are many who feel the danger of being led away from God, and ensnared by some such idols as those of which I have been speaking. There is no place in the world, and no position in society, which is free from danger; Paradise was not free, certainly this place can never be made so. What shall we say then? In general I should say, Be diligent in prayer, be attentive to your duties, keep under your bodies and bring them into subjection, fight against the devil,—it may require prayer and fasting to cast him out,—tear down the idols from your hearts, think what it will profit you if you gain the world and lose your souls after all—this I should say in general; but with reference to the particular view brought

before us by my present subject I should say, Brethren, *the Son of God is come*; He is the great destroyer of idols; He stands by those who wear His uniform, and who are not ashamed of His cross; He can sympathise with those who are tempted, having been tempted Himself;—think upon the Advent of Christ in great humility; think, if you find it necessary, upon His more glorious Advent to judgment; and then say, whenever you are tempted to fall down before any of the manifold idols which the world contains, “I must not, I cannot do it, for I know that *the Son of God is come.*”

SERMON III.

THE TRUE PREPARATION FOR THE ADVENT OF CHRIST.

S. MATTHEW XI. 2, 3.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another ?

THESE words of S. John the Baptist stand in remarkable contrast with those of S. John the Evangelist, which formed the text of my sermon last Sunday. Last Sunday we heard S. John the Evangelist, in the prospect of a departure from this world, which could not be very far distant, reminding his disciples that they knew that the Son of God was come ; to-day we hear S. John the Baptist uttering from the prison, which was soon the scene of his murder, by the mouth of two of *his* disciples, the sad and almost despairing question, whether He who was come, and whose Advent he had himself proclaimed, was indeed the Son of God. The two views of the Lord's Advent are characteristic of the positions, which the two saints respectively occupy in the economy of the Gospel. John the Herald points to Christ,

and excites men's minds to inquire concerning Him, and prepares the hearts of the people to receive Him aright, and has to a great extent fulfilled his course when he has led the multitude to ask with seriousness, *Art Thou He which should come?* John, the Preacher of a crucified, risen, and ascended Lord, allows of no such question amongst those who have put on Christ, but dictates to them the proper utterance of their hearts in the noble confession of faith, *We know that the Son of God is come.* John the Baptist verified the words of our Lord, in which He declared that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he, by allowing thoughts of doubt to cloud the evening of his days, and by using language which stands forth in striking contrast, not only with the language of S. John the Evangelist, but with that which has been used by very babes and sucklings, who, in the Christian Church, have been privileged to believe in Jesus Christ.

I know that a different view has been taken of S. John's words in the text: it has been thought impossible that he could really waver in his faith, that he could have a doubt to be resolved, that he could for his own sake ask a question, which, so taken, would seem to contradict the whole testi-

mony of his life and throw doubt upon the sincerity of his ministry and preaching. And indeed it is easy to say that S. John the Baptist as being inspired *must* have known that Jesus Christ *was* He, and therefore that he *could* not have asked the question with reference to any difficulties of his own: nor have I any especial desire to combat this view: possibly it may be the true one: but certainly to myself it appears far from impossible, that as S. John the Baptist lay captive in the fortress of Machærus, and saw day after day passing, and yet heard no news of a glorious coming of the kingdom of God, as he mused in his solitude and under the influence of all circumstances which could make solitude oppressive to the spirit, as he thought of all that he had been permitted to do in his days of freedom, and all the hopes which he had excited, and all the penitence which he had produced by declaring the near approach of the kingdom of God, he might have had from time to time desponding thoughts in his heart, and might have endeavoured to gain relief for his own mind, and a refuge from his own despondency, by sending disciples to Christ, and asking, *Art Thou He which should come?*

But to whatever extent the language of

S. John may be regarded as typical of the imperfection of his own ministry and his inferiority to ourselves in point of religious privilege, he and his ministry are held up this day by the Church to our notice, as an example to the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries in the Christian dispensation, and as a lesson concerning the right mode of making preparation for the second coming of Christ. The work, which S. John did, is not allowed to become merely matter of history: we are not permitted to contemplate the strange man in the desert, with his crowd of anxious inquirers, and to say, "Thus ancient prophecy was fulfilled," and "Thus it pleased God to point the attention of the people of those days to the coming of His blessed Son." On the other hand, the ministry of S. John is set forth as a matter of permanent interest; one Advent of Christ has had its preparation and its herald, but there is another Advent which equally demands that a preparation be made for it, and which requires not one herald, but thousands: all the work of the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries may be described briefly as a preparation for the Advent of Christ: every prayer is this, every sermon is this, every sacrament administered is this, every sinner warned of the error

of his way, still more every sinner convinced of the error of his way and converted to the way of God, every Church built, every mission to the heathen, every effort to spread the knowledge of Christ, to infuse the spirit of Christ, to cause His Name to be adored from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, is part of the great dispensation of the Gospel, which, resting upon the truth that Christ once came in great humility, reaches out towards the completion of that truth in the coming of Christ a second time, in unspeakable glory, to judge the living and the dead.

I propose then to regard the ministry of S. John the Baptist, which was in its whole idea preparatory to the coming of our Lord, as suggestive of the preparation to be made continually, by the ministers and stewards of divine mysteries, for the second Advent of Jesus Christ.

The first thing to which I will call your attention is this, that the preaching of S. John was emphatically a preaching of repentance. The words which have been recorded as containing an epitome of his teaching are these, *Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; he warned the people, who came into the wilderness to listen to him, that it was no time for hypocrisy and empty

profession and respectable conventionalities; He who was coming was One, whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner and burn up the chaff with fire; He was One, who would institute a baptism, of which that of John was only a sign and pledge, a baptism not with water but with the Holy Ghost and with fire;—*fire* again, you will observe,—*fire* to consume, and *fire* to bless,—fire to destroy all that would not abide the day of His coming, and fire to refine and purify all that should stand approved in His sight. Meanwhile S. John pointed to the Lamb of God, which was to take away the sin of the world: his was not an unmixed assertion of the danger of sin and the terrors of judgment; he would not have satisfied the feelings which had been cherished in all true Jewish hearts, if he had not spoken of a deliverer, and represented one who was mighty to save as the bringer in of the kingdom of God. He was therefore in the truest sense a herald of the Gospel; he declared (so far as he was permitted to do so) the love of God to mankind; he reminded the people of sin, not merely for the sake of bringing their sins to painful and unprofitable remembrance, but for the sake of shewing them where

they might go with their burden, and lose it, so that it should be seen no more. But all was to be based upon repentance: there could be no Gospel without that, no deliverance without that, no Lamb of God capable of taking away their sins without that absolutely essential condition of pardon: he did not say, "Repent, and that is all:" he did not preach repentance as the cure of sin, and the one thing necessary for securing the favour of God; he had much deeper divinity than this; and when he baptized for the remission of sins, he knew that the waters of Jordan could only acquire healing properties from the power of Him, who was to follow with a more glorious Baptism, and who afterwards sanctified those waters by the contact of His own most blessed body. Nevertheless S. John *did* preach repentance; he preached Christ, but he preached this too; or rather he preached this, because he could in no other way preach Christ; and it is as such a preacher, that he is held up by the Church for our imitation; in the Collect of this day we pray, that the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries may go and do likewise; the doctrine which we have learnt is, not that the method which S. John adopted in the days of Christ's first Advent is unsuitable for the

days of full Gospel light and Gospel privileges, but rather that that method is to be taken by ourselves as a model in *our* preparation for Christ's second coming.

I say that S. John's method of preparing the way for Christ is to be taken as a model by us, who are the ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God. I do so upon the strength of Holy Scripture; and I am supported by the Collect which we have used this day. And I do so more especially, because it is not only good for *us* to have a model before our eyes, and to be able to judge thereby whether we are preparing for the Advent of Christ as we ought, but it is good also for the laity to contemplate such a model, and learn from it wisdom and discretion in deciding what is, and what is not, *preaching the Gospel*. I suppose that all of us, the preachers of God's word, consider that it is our duty and our privilege to *preach the Gospel*, that we do in fact preach the Gospel when we direct the eyes of the people towards the Lamb of God, that all which tends to stir up serious thoughts in men's hearts, and touch their consciences and turn them from the power of Satan unto God, is part of that preparation for the coming of Christ, which it is the duty of preachers of the

Gospel by all means to forward. But in the mouths of many persons, the phrase *preaching the Gospel* has been made to mean something much more narrow than this; a minister of Christ may be as devoted and earnest as possible, and yet that which he preaches may be decided by some, who think themselves qualified to give a decision, to be *not* the Gospel; and a sermon may be admitted to be true as far as it goes and even useful, and yet it may be sentenced as incapable of doing a real spiritual work in the souls of men, because it is *not* the Gospel. Of course I do not contend that such criticisms may not in some instances be true; a man *may* be in Holy Orders, and yet he may not have learned Christ; and a sermon may be formally orthodox, and yet it may have in it little of the teaching of the Spirit; nay, it is possible that a man may be earnest in doing what he conceives to be his Master's work, and yet he *may*—it seems not very probable, but still he *may*—have missed those fundamental principles, upon which his Master's Church is built; but then also this is very possible, and perhaps one may venture to say in many cases much more probable, namely, that Christians sometimes undertake to say too positively what *is* and what is *not* the Gospel, that

they seize hold of one view of the work of Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the preparation necessary for His Advent, and say there can be no other view; that they forget how wide is the distinction between the views taken by the Apostles themselves, between the tone of the Epistles of S. Paul, for instance, and the tone of the Epistle of S. James, and that thus instead of glorifying Christ they rend His body and speak evil of their brethren. Now I am sure, that this narrow view of the work to be done for Christ in the world, is not according to His own most blessed will; and in illustration of this, I will call your attention to two or three passages in the Gospels, which, by comparison with one another, may be made to throw a somewhat striking light upon the subject. In S. Matt. x. we read that our Lord gave His disciples a command to go and preach, that *the kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; in the parallel passage of S. Luke, we find the Lord commanding them *to preach the kingdom of God*; and in S. Mark and S. Luke, we have an account of the manner in which they discharged their mission. How *did* they discharge it? S. Luke tells us, that *they preached the Gospel*; and S. Mark, that *they went out, and preached that men should repent*.

Observe ; we have the Lord's command to preach the coming of the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Heaven, and we have the performance of that command expressed by one Evangelist under the form, *they preached the Gospel*, by another under the form, *they preached repentance*. Could the Evangelists have had the same notion of the phrase, *preaching the Gospel*, as that which is often found current nowadays? Did not they consider that the Gospel could not be preached without repentance, and that repentance could not be preached without the Gospel, and that the joint preaching of the one and the other, the presenting the two in that unity in which God has bound them, and which man has no right to put asunder, may be justly regarded as the work to be done by the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries in preparation for the kingdom of Heaven? The fact is, that in this, as in other things, Christ has not destroyed the Law and the Prophets, but fulfilled them. He has not done away with repentance, or made it any the less necessary for men to keep God's commandments, and strive against sin, and lead holy and just and truthful and modest lives. He has not abolished the old standards of right and wrong, or taught us to think lightly of evil,

or given the smallest encouragement to adopt antinomian blasphemies, or anything remotely leading thereto. That which He *has* done, if I read the Scriptures aright, that for which we are bound for evermore to bless and praise His most holy Name is this, that He has joined repentance and the Gospel together. We read of our Lord Himself, that, when He went through Galilee preaching, the substance of His discourse was this, *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel*; when He gave His Apostles their final commission before being taken from them, He told them that *repentance and remission of sins were to be preached through His Name*; when we look at the history of what the Apostles did after the day of Pentecost, we find them saying, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins*, and again, *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*. It was not therefore the doing away with repentance and all the moral effort and discipline which repentance implies, in which the glory of the Ministry of Christ and the new covenant consisted; it was rather the direction given to repentance, and the course to which repentance was permitted to lead. *Repent*, said our blessed Lord, and—what? Try to appease God's

wrath against your sin? offer the best things you have, the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul? live the life of a hermit, afflict your soul with fasting, and your body with sackcloth? throw yourself upon your general trust in the mercy of Him who made you?—not so: this might be well enough if Christ had not come into the world, but it is precisely such views as these of the manner and fruits of repentance, that Christ came into the world to abolish or supersede: and therefore our Lord sums up the whole matter in that most blessed Sermon of His, to which I just now referred, *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel*. Repent, and believe that God loves you. Repent, and believe that you are God's children. Repent, and believe that there is a Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

S. John the Baptist then did in reality that which the Collect for this day implies, namely, leave to the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries an example of the right method of preaching the Gospel: and I may add, that it is an example, which has been taken up and illustrated by the order of our own Church service. I think it should never be forgotten by those, who, ministering according to the order of the Church of England,

would also minister according to her spirit, that the daily service opens with some texts from Scripture, and a short sermon, very much in the tone of the preaching of S. John the Baptist. The danger of cloaking our sins, the need of confessing them, and of course (if we would not play the hypocrite in the presence of Almighty God) the need of renouncing them—these are the topics which, according to the order of the Church of England, are put first and foremost before those who come to worship. It is on the strength of such teaching that the Minister and people together are brought upon their knees, and that they jointly acknowledge their sinfulness and implore the mercy of God through Jesus Christ; and when, in the exercise of his high office, the Priest stands up to declare the absolution and remission of sins in the Name of God, it is to the penitent that he ventures to declare God's mercy. And now the Priest stands as completing his declaration of the Gospel; he speaks of Him, from whom he has received his commission, as *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; it is no ambiguous hope of grace, which he has to hold out; it is with no faltering tongue that he declares the remission of sins; he speaks as one who has been sent to preach the Gospel, and who does so by

calling men to repentance in the sight of the Lamb of God who takes away their sins. The Christian Priest is not the less the *steward of mysteries*, because his message is thus plain and simple; nay, when he presents himself in the most special manner as the steward of mysteries, when he consecrates that sacrament which sets forth the death of Christ and the mystery of His sacrifice upon the cross, when he is made the means of distributing to the faithful that bread of which Christ said *This is My body*, and that wine of which Christ said *This is My blood*, he still can only venture to bring his people near to God by the path which S. John the Baptist pointed out. Who may approach the table of the Lord, and partake without peril to their souls, but rather to their great and endless comfort, of those most holy mysteries? Surely they only, who first, kneeling upon their knees, declare from the bottom of their hearts that the burden of their sins is intolerable; the communicant must first be a penitent; the Priest must in the Name of God declare the absolution and remission of sins, not only to the larger assembly of those, who join in that, which, according to present custom, is the more ordinary form of worship, but also to those, who join in the highest and most

emphatically *Christian* worship, and who seek in that divinely appointed way the closest communion with Him whom their souls love. If the Church of England be right, if she rightly represent the primitive Church and be a trustworthy exponent of the Word of God, then S. John the Baptist's lesson of repentance is still the proper inscription for the Church porch, and for the altar too. Kneel meekly on your knees first; and then *sursum corda*.

But there is another view, which I wish to present to you, of S. John the Baptist's ministry, because I think it will be useful to us when we regard him as a model for the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of the Gospel. John was a man of severe and mortified life, a Priest of a highly ascetic order; his robes camels' hair, his Church the desert, his font the Jordan. He was quite one of those persons, who in our own days would have been condemned as taking extreme views of religion, and would probably have been regarded as dangerous. However, there was an earnestness about his preaching which men could not put aside; when he spoke of the kingdom of God being near, and of a mightier than himself coming with fan in hand to purge the threshing-floor, and of a baptism with the Holy Ghost and

with fire, he so manifestly believed all that he said, his mode of life, strange as it might appear, was still so thoroughly in keeping with the character he assumed, as the herald of events unspeakably awful, and of a kingdom which if resisted would be unspeakably terrible, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and of the country round about could not afford to put his preaching on one side as the utterance of a diseased brain. Accordingly the people flocked to him in crowds; they came confessing their sins, and they were ready to be baptized in Jordan; but they felt that something more than this was required; they had heard the withering rebuke, with which S. John sent away the Pharisees who came to him, and bid them bring forth fruits meet for repentance; they did not wish to have their portion with the hypocrites; they came therefore in an earnest spirit to know what they should *do*. I am referring now to that account of S. John's ministry, which is given by S. Luke, and which forms an important supplement to the histories given in the other three Gospels. *The axe is laid unto the root of the trees*, cried S. John in the desert,—and we can perhaps imagine something of the effect of the words as they came from the mouth of so strange a preacher in so

strange a place—the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. A terrible message; terrible at least if the people believed it, as I suppose they really did; and if they did, who can wonder that they should ask with some degree of anxiety, *What shall we do then?* I conceive that they expected, like the Syrian leper, Naaman, to be told of *some great thing* which they must do; the most probable thing perhaps in their judgment was, that S. John would say, “You see what *I* have done; go and do ye likewise.” They could hardly have murmured, if, when asking advice of one who had left the haunts of men and taken up his home in the desert, they had been told, that they too must flee from the world, as Lot did from Sodom, and that the life of a hermit was the only safe one for the human soul. Would not S. John have done that, which many other men, who have felt themselves called to prepare for the Advent of Christ, have done, if he had seized hold upon the zeal which he had roused, and brought a crowd of monks into the desert, and founded a religious order, and made an ascetic life the true and safe road to heaven? Doubtless if S. John had taken this view of his

mission, he would have found many to follow him; and I can hardly fancy that the people, who asked what they should *do*, would have taken amiss an earnest exhortation to a retired and ascetic life; certainly I think they must have been surprised, when they heard from the lips of S. John this plain and simple precept, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* Was *this* preaching the Gospel? *this* the preparation for the kingdom of God? *this* the method of standing approved in the sight of Him, who was laying His axe to the root of fruitless trees? It was even so. And the Evangelist who records this teaching of S. John gives an additional emphasis to it by telling us, not only of the people in general who came to make inquiry, but of particular classes, who more than others perhaps had reason to believe that something decisive must be done by *them*, in preparation for the Advent of Him whom S. John preached. For example, the *publicans* came to be baptized, and said, *Master, what shall we do?* And the *great* thing which was required of *them* was, not the giving up of their calling, dangerous as it was and likely to lead them away from honesty and godliness, but the glorifying of God by

resisting temptation in their calling. *Exact no more than that which is appointed you*, said S. John; that was all. Had the office of a publican been wicked in itself, it would have been a different matter; but as not being wicked, but only dangerous, it was possible for publicans to prepare for the coming of Christ by doing their duty in their calling. Was this preaching the Gospel? I suppose that we must allow it to have been so. And again, when the soldiers came to S. John and asked, *What shall we do?* he taught them upon the same principle. This was a case to test the application of S. John's method of preaching as much as any. Who so unfavourably placed for preparing to meet God, as a soldier under Roman authority? surely these must have expected to receive a less commonplace explanation, than that which was given to the publicans. Yet it was not so; the command to the soldiers and that to the publicans were of a piece; it was still the necessity, not of attempting some great thing, but of doing their duty in that station of life to which it had pleased God to call them. *Do violence to no man*, said S. John, *neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages*. Once more I ask, was this preaching the Gospel? and

once more I reply, that I suppose we must allow it to have been so. Of course it was not the whole, but it *was* a very essential part; he who cried, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*, knew also and declared to those who came for advice, that it was in "the daily round" and "the common task," that they were chiefly to prepare themselves to see Him; it was in the path of plain practical duty, that He whom S. John announced would desire to find those walking, who were wishing to make ready for His coming. Of course there might be exceptional cases; no one knew this better than S. John himself; he himself *had* put aside the common tasks of ordinary life, he *had* become an ascetic, and had left the world and gone into the wilderness; and there might be others whose calling might be the same, and who might be driven into the wilderness by the Spirit of God; but this was not the ordinary path, not the King's highway to the celestial city; *that* was nearer home; it ran through all the familiar scenes of childhood and the ways of common life, and needed only that the eye should be purged to see it, and the will strengthened to follow it. And even if some earnest souls, whose path into the wilderness was not so clearly marked

as that of S. John, did nevertheless go there to prepare for the coming of Christ,—if they went beyond his command, and, failing to find peace in their old occupations, sought it in penitential discipline away from the haunts of men,—I conceive that he would look indulgently upon their conduct; that upon which S. John *could* not and *did* not look indulgently, that which called forth all those fiery denunciations of a wrath to come, which God had permitted him to use, that which made him repel some from his baptism and ask them scornfully, *Who hath warned you?* was (as we find from S. Matthew) the respectable hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and the comfortable worldliness of the Sadducees; these must bring forth fruits worthy of repentance; these must learn to do something more than adopt a religious language, and make empty professions of faith; these must be taught that they who would listen to the Gospel, and make it truly a Gospel to their souls, must not only profess to *believe*, but must shew by their life and conduct that they are also prepared to *do*.

So much then, Christian brethren, for the ministry of S. John the Baptist, regarded as a model and type of the ministry of those, who in our own days are stewards of the mysteries of God. The

points upon which I chiefly desire to fix attention are these ; that in preaching the Gospel of Christ's Advent, S. John first and most emphatically preached repentance ; that he supported and interpreted his preaching of repentance by an enforcement of practical and common duties ; and that it was in conjunction with such preaching, or rather by means of it, that he pointed the eyes of men to that Lamb of God, who was walking in the midst of them, and whose precious blood was to be shed for their sins. If it be said that S. John the Baptist was only a forerunner of the Kingdom of Heaven, that he dwelt only in the twilight which preceded the glorious rising of the Sun of Righteousness and the full daylight of the Christian Church, I might reply, that although this be true, still it is not the way in which we have been taught by the Collect of this day to regard his ministry, and therefore not the way in which it can exclusively be regarded by any consistent member of the English Church. But I am content to waive the advantage which such a reply would give me, and to appeal to Holy Scripture and to the reason of the thing itself. Let any one look to the writings of the New Testament, to the Acts of the Apostles, for a record of what they did, or to the Epistles, for a

record of what they thought and felt; and I think he will find that repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a practical walking in the ways of holiness, do ever go hand in hand. Of course, in the Epistles we hear (comparatively speaking) little of repentance, because the men to whom they were written *had* repented already; but oh! how practical they are! how they carry faith into action! how they protest against that empty profession, which will permit men to say *Lord, Lord*, and not do the things which the Lord says! I might support this view by passages innumerable. And if we look to the reason of the thing, do we not find reason and Scripture at one? What preparation can there be for the Advent of Him, who will judge all men according as their work shall be, but the preparation of penitence and of practical holiness? What shall it profit a man to say, I have faith and no works,—can such faith as this save him? Rather is it not to insult Him, whose Advent we pretend to expect, and to shew that we are like the Pharisees or the Sadducees, either hypocrites at heart or worldlings in life, if we venture to speak of His Advent, and do not regard the mention of that great reality as the most urgent call to sorrow for sin,

and the most powerful argument for holiness of life?

The truth is, that no man need dread the charge of not preaching the Gospel, merely because he lays great stress, as S. John did, upon repentance and holiness and duty. He will preach the Gospel, provided he preaches these in organic and vital connexion with faith in the Lamb of God. If we preach repentance without pointing to Christ, we preach a duty, but we hide the love of God, and destroy the ground of human hope. If we preach holiness of life, and do not point to that fountain which has been opened for sin and uncleanness, and to that spring of spiritual influences which first broke forth upon the world in all its power upon the day of Pentecost, then we preach that which the conscience may admit to be needful, but which human frailty may seem to make impossible. If, in fact, we preach these without pointing to the Lamb of God, without declaring most fully His redemptive work, without making Him the beginning and the end of a sinner's hopes, the first and the last of the dispensation of God's infinite love, then indeed we do *not* preach the Gospel, and we do *not* follow the example of S. John. He pointed to the Lamb of God,—so must

we. As the herald of Christ he preached penitence and simple practical godliness,—so must we. Nay, more than this; we must preach Christ so as S. John the Baptist could not preach Him. We stand within that blessed kingdom, which he only heralded as being at hand; we can speak of labours and sorrows undergone, of fasting and temptation in the wilderness, of a head which had no pillow to rest upon, of a heart which could groan and of eyes which could weep, of desertion by friends and cruel persecution of enemies, of treachery and false witness, of a cross and passion, and of a death and burial,—we can point to all these things, as having been actually undergone by One who was the Son of God, because we had erred and strayed from the ways of His Father like lost sheep; and because we know these things which S. John did not know, therefore we are able to preach that portion of the Gospel which S. John preached with an emphasis which for him was impossible; we *must* not give it up, we must assert it more strongly than ever; in the full knowledge of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, we must still preach throughout the wilderness of the world the need of repentance from sin and the equal need of holiness of life.

Do I insinuate that there are those amongst us, who would make light of repentance, and think it no part of a Christian minister's duty to insist upon holiness? I wish to insinuate nothing of the kind. I think indeed that a style of teaching is sometimes adopted, which may be abused in the direction of antinomian error; but I believe that in general they who preach the doctrine would be the first to declare that this *was* a most foul abuse. In truth, I have no wish to throw out hints of blame upon others; I know, for myself, how hard it is to preach Christ as He should be preached, and how the mists of this world are apt to rise about us and hide from our minds that clear view of the Saviour in all the glory of His most adorable person and work, which it ought to be our privilege to see, and under the influence of which we must declare His Name and preach His Gospel. Therefore, if any man be earnestly set upon preaching Christ, God forbid that I should say that he does not preach Him truly. If a man devoutly love Christ, and esteem it his highest privilege to declare His saving Name, then it would be a shame not to love that man with all one's heart, and to own him for a brother soldier in the same great cause. What I would wish to urge is, that we

should all act upon this principle, that putting aside petty feelings of party and prejudice we should own all as Preachers of the Gospel, who earnestly minister in that holy office, to which they have been called as stewards of the mysteries of God. Have we not enough to do in the great war against sin, to put a stop to jealousies amongst ourselves? Is it for us, the sworn champions of Christ, to bandy about nicknames, and to speak evil one of another, and to judge one another, and so to put the cause of Christ to shame in the sight of the hostile army of the devil and his angels? Is this the sight, which Christ would wish to see, if He were now to come again in His glory? Oh, my young Christian brethren, who are soon to be ordained as Ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, eschew, I entreat you, all narrow feelings of party, which separate Christ's servants one from another, and weaken their hands in the great fight of faith. Keep your eyes steadily upon Him whose name you bear, and preach His Gospel in all its fulness. Do not narrow that Gospel to a few doctrines, whether those favoured doctrines be what are called Evangelical, or Sacramental, or the Shibboleth of this school or that; but endeavour rather to contemplate Christ as the centre of

all human hopes, the ground of all human duties, and the object of all human love, and then speak of Him as your hearts prompt you, and as Apostles and Saints and Martyrs have spoken of Him before. So will you be true messengers of the Advent of Christ; so may you hope to be accounted good stewards of the mysteries of God; and so may you look forward to a joyful appearance with the children whom God has given you, when He, whom you have preached as the Saviour of mankind, comes in glory to be their Judge.

SERMON IV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONTEMPLATION OF THE ADVENT OF CHRIST.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 4, 5.

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

IN my sermon of last Sunday I spoke of the preparation, which must be made for the coming of Christ by those, who according to the Providence of God are ministers and stewards of His mysteries. I was led into that subject by the tone of the Church-services; and I felt that for such a congregation as that to which I was preaching, composed so largely of those who either had received the imposition of hands for the office of the Ministry, or were looking forward to the office as the result of their University education, no subject could be found of deeper and more solemn importance. To-day I am led in like manner by the tone of the Church-services to a subject kindred in its character, and in a certain sense complementary to the other. The Collect of last Sunday, regarded as the outpouring of the hearts of the Christian

congregation, conveys the prayers of the Church for those who are appointed to minister to them in holy things: the Collect of to-day conveys the supplications of the people, not for their ministers, but for themselves. The occasion of the two prayers is the same, namely, the prospect of the Advent of Christ; the result sought for is the same, namely, that when Christ comes He may find a people prepared to receive Him; but the views taken of the preparation necessary for that Advent are different, though cognate, and each is required to complete the other. The ministers must work; but the people must give heed to their ministry. The ministers must call men to repentance and holiness and faith in the Lamb of God; but the people must see to it that the calls are not rendered nugatory by their hardness of heart. The ministers must do their utmost to realize the character of messengers of Jesus Christ; but the people must learn that the best messengers may bear messages in vain, and that *their* true wisdom consists in imploring the Lord Himself to *raise up His power and come amongst them*, and by *His bountiful grace and mercy speedily to help and deliver them*.

I propose then to offer you a few considerations concerning the preparation to be made by

Christians for the Advent of Christ. I shall found my remarks upon those words of S. Paul to the Philippians, which I have taken for a text; and that, not merely because it is customary to make a passage of Scripture the basis of a sermon, but because in such a case as that with which we are concerned to-day we may hope to gain a very living view of our subject by observing the tone in which it is treated by S. Paul. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth in glory, which was spoken of by the angels when He left the world and ascended up into heaven, was to S. Paul and the rest of the Apostles, and the members of the early Church, an article of faith, such as we perhaps find it difficult to realize. It was one of the main truths of their spiritual lives. It was their support in trouble; it was the weapon, with which they beat down their adversaries; it was their unfailing source of comfort and peace, when all other sources were dried up; in their deepest affliction they were able to adopt and act upon those words, which S. Paul wrote in the chapter preceding that from which I have taken my text, *Our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* Of course, lives, of which such a belief as this was

one of the main truths, would by those who believed not be accounted madness; it would be intolerable to the heathen adversaries of Christianity, that there should be a creed so strange, so original, and held with such pertinacity, which no ridicule or persecution could shake, which was indeed a *creed*, and demonstrated itself to be so by teaching men how to live and how to die, and by making them proof against every argument and enticement to apostasy, that they with all their ingenuity were able to invent. And one can fancy the scorn with which the adversaries would regard this article of the Christian Creed, and those who held it, as year after year passed by, and martyr after martyr perished, and it was shewn that no charm protected the lives of Christians, and that, notwithstanding the cries of His servants, the Lord did not appear. Nevertheless the Creed held its ground; each martyr died upon it as bravely as the noble army, which he went to join, had died before him; and if Christ had not yet come to assert His kingdom upon earth, the martyr found abundant consolation in the belief, that *he* was taken away from the world to be present with the Lord.

I need not remind you that some critics have taken objection to S. Paul as a teacher of divine

truth, on the ground that he himself had erroneous notions concerning this coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. For myself I entirely agree with what was said by my predecessor in this pulpit¹, namely, that we are not bound by our reverence for S. Paul, as an inspired preacher of the word, to maintain that he was incapable of expectations and hopes concerning the *παρουσία* of Christ, which experience proved to be incorrect. When we remember the language in which our Lord once expressed Himself to His disciples in answer to the question, *When shall these things be?* when we find Him, after the solemn declaration, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away*, adding, *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*, we may without any disrespect towards an Apostle conceive that the vividness, with which the picture of Christ's coming had impressed itself upon the eye of his mind, had led him to regard the object of his hope as being nearer to him than it really was. I do not at all assert that S. Paul was under the influence of an optical illusion of this kind; I think that a comparison of the Second Epistle to the

¹ The Rev. James Atlay, of S. John's College.

Thessalonians with the First ought to make us very cautious of hazarding such an assertion; but even if it were so, the illusion would not prove that there was no real object before the Apostle's eye, in contemplation of which he discoursed so earnestly concerning the coming of the Lord, but only that the object was so intensely bright that it seemed to be close to him, and that eyes such as his required in the contemplation of it no aid from the telescope of faith. S. Paul (as we may believe) wrote and spoke as he saw; however it might appear to others, to *him* it was intensely true that the Lord was *at hand*; and I would observe, that the word which in the text is thus translated is as much an adverb of *place*, as of *time*; ὁ Κύριος ἐγγύς, *the Lord is near*; and as our own phrase, *at hand*, is originally indicative of place and only figuratively of time, and as the word *near* is applicable to either the one kind of proximity or the other, so it may well be deemed worthy of notice, that the Apostle's magnificent declaration, ὁ Κύριος ἐγγύς, suggests at least a more real proximity than that which belongs to time only. When the Martyr Stephen saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, might not *he* have said, *The Lord is at hand*? When S. Paul

himself speaks of his own appearance before Nero, and describes the manner in which his brethren deserted him, and how He who sticketh closer than a brother stood by him and strengthened him and delivered him from the mouth of the lion, might not he also have said with reference to this presence of Christ, *The Lord was at hand?* And are not these words the right expression of the faith of those, who look upon this world as not deserted by its Lord, who contemplate Christ as truly and continually present with His Church, who remember His own words, *Behold, I am with you always*, and who therefore regard His Advent, not as the return of one who has been absent from us, but rather as the manifestation of a presence which in reality has never been removed? The fact is, that we are too apt to reduce everything in the universe to the revolutions of the heavens or the beats of clocks: but there are truths in the economy of God, that will not admit of such evaluation as this: there is a region, in which time and space lose their monopoly of human conceptions: and possibly, when a man has been carried up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, he may describe the coming of Christ in language, which it may be at once difficult for us to realize as a com-

plete exponent of the truth, and impertinent for us to criticize as in any respect defective and untrue.

But whatever be the limits of the meaning to be attached to S. Paul's emphatic announcement, *The Lord is at hand*, it is plain that the Apostle wrote the words of the text under the conviction, that the interpretation which the Philippian Christians would put upon his words would be sufficient to carry the weight of those two exhortations, which, although they precede the announcement in point of order, are nevertheless manifestly based upon it. Those two exhortations refer respectively to the tone of feeling, and the kind of conduct, which befit persons who believe that *the Lord is at hand*. With regard to the former it is to be observed, that the circumstances under which S. Paul wrote add much to its interest and force. A recent commentator¹, remarking upon the phrase, *Rejoice in the Lord always*, and upon the manner in which by the additional words, *Again, I say, rejoice*, the Apostle takes up the theme with which the preceding chapter opened, describes this exhortation to rejoice in the Lord as *the ground-tone of the Epistle*: and I think we may accept the description as correct. Alien as are many passages in the

¹ Dean Alford.

Epistle, according to any worldly estimate, from the spirit of gladness, still there does run throughout an unmistakeable *bass* of joy in Christ, of perfect confidence that Christ is true, of perfect assurance that He will one day manifest Himself as He is, the effect of which is only intensified by a few discordant flats. But is it not remarkable that this should be so? When the author of the Epistle was writing as a prisoner, when the prospect of a violent death was immediately before him, when his life had grown so wearisome that the natural love of it had become extinct in his breast, and when he was writing to those whom he was able to congratulate chiefly upon this, that they had been permitted like himself to suffer for the sake of Christ, is it not remarkable that the *ground-tone* of the Epistle *should* be capable of being described as one of rejoicing? It is remarkable, but it is not strange, neither is there in it anything hypocritical or unreal: the exhortation to rejoice is in organic connexion with the declaration, *The Lord is at hand*; it is not an exhortation to rejoice absolutely and without reserve, but emphatically to rejoice *in the Lord*, to rejoice in Him who was near, to do that which men could not fail to do who believed in the Advent of Christ, to indulge

the feelings which must infallibly spring up in the hearts of those, who, having suffered for the sake of Christ, were looking for a cessation of their sufferings in the complete and personal fruition of the presence of their Lord. S. Paul felt therefore that he was dictating to the Philippians no violent effort, when in the midst of their persecutors he bade them *rejoice always*; this was his precept concerning the general tone of feeling befitting Christians: it did not exhaust the subject; it did not exclude other feelings; nay, it occurs in that very Epistle, which speaks of *fear and trembling* as descriptive of the condition of mind in which salvation must be worked out; but still joy in Christ is to be the *ground-tone* of the hearts of the redeemed, as it is of S. Paul's Epistle; no other feelings are to displace this; he who believes that his life is hid with Christ in God cannot fail to rejoice in the thought that Christ the Lord is at hand.

Nor can there be any better proof of the subordination in which this rejoicing is to be held, than the connexion in which the precept to rejoice stands with that other precept concerning practical conduct, *Let your moderation be known unto all men*. I do not care to discuss the precise force of the term, which is expressed by the word *modera-*

tion ; probably that word gives the force of the original as well as any single word which could be substituted, implying as it does a circumspection of conduct, a high principle of action in ordinary matters, an honesty between man and man, which should make it manifest to the world at large, that Christians were not merely inflated with hopes of a future glory, but made positively better by their faith in this present life, more upright, more gentle, more courteous, more worthy of the love and confidence of their fellows. We shall hardly misinterpret S. Paul's words, if we regard them as the echo of the charge of Christ, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* But the emphasis of the words as coming from S. Paul depends chiefly upon their connexion with the words, *The Lord is at hand* : I have said that this announcement bears the weight both of the charge with respect to the tone of feeling, and of that with respect to the kind of conduct befitting those who expect their Lord ; the feeling is to be that of joy, and the conduct is to be such as to approve itself as good. The expectation of Christ is not to turn men's heads, and unfit them for ordinary occupations, and drive them wild with

excitement, or paralyze them with terror, or make them fancy that they have nothing to do with the interests of this present world. The man who is really prepared for the coming of Christ is he who rejoices in the Lord, and whose moderation is known to men. Whatever might be the minute details of S. Paul's expectations and hopes concerning the Advent of Christ, he could give no better advice to those, who wished to be ready, than that which the text contains. If the Advent were delayed, they who followed his advice would be safe; and if the last trumpet were to sound immediately, and the heavens to be swept away like a scroll, they would be safe still.

And from this point we may see how completely the words, which S. Paul spoke to the Christians of his time, belong to ourselves. That tone of joy which arises from the conviction that the Lord is at hand, and that accompanying conviction of the necessity of living holily, righteously, and godly in this present world, that sense of the presence of Christ which was the life of the early Church, has ever been the Christian heritage, and has been the spring of life and health in all ages. When Churches flourish, it is because they believe that the Lord is at hand; and when they languish

and decay, it is because they have lost faith in His presence, and have believed in the pleasures of this world, and have persuaded themselves that the Lord's coming is delayed, or is a fiction altogether. Human souls follow the same law; they too flourish and bring forth the fruits of active holiness when they believe that Christ is near them, and they too languish and decay when they allow the mists of the world to hide Christ from their eyes, and when they lose at once the power of saying with confidence, *we know that the Son of God is come*, and the power of rejoicing in the hope that the Son of God will come again. Can I be wrong then, Christian brethren, in seizing upon S. Paul's language in the text, and in closing this Advent course of sermons by endeavouring to deepen in your minds the solemn impressions, which the words must have produced when you heard them in the Epistle for the day?

I take the words, according to the principle adopted throughout the Advent services of the Church, as admitting of a twofold application. When I read that *The Lord is at hand*, I refer the expression in the first instance to the festival of Christmas-day, and consider it as appropriate to the last Sunday in Advent because the birth

of Christ is so near. We are not likely to forget the season of Christmas. To whatever extent the authority of Christ may have been assailed, and however it may be true that other lords besides Him have dominion over the hearts of men, still His birth has demonstrated its power by consecrating the season in which it is celebrated to feelings of brotherly love and works of mercy. But I need not say, that, just because the feast of Christmas has been adopted as an occasion of general festivity, it is in danger of losing its more solemn and religious character; the feast is in danger of becoming secularized; the joy in the Lord of which St Paul speaks, and which is emphatically *Christian* joy, is liable to be supplanted by a joy which has its root in this world only. However, even in this way Christ is honoured; even thus He has come to bless the nations; and though the highest strain of the angels' song be wanting, in which they sang of *Glory to God*, still the other strains are not forgotten, in which they sang of *Peace upon earth* and *Good will towards men*. It is equally unnecessary for me to say, that for ourselves as earnest worshippers of Christ the joy of the Angels ought to call forth a full response from our hearts. *The Lord is at hand*—what does

the announcement mean? It means that Christ is soon to be born in Bethlehem; and it leads our minds at once into the deepest mysteries of Christian truth. It brings before us, for instance, that fundamental mystery of our faith upon which all others hang: perhaps we may say, that it brings it before us more clearly than any other part of the Lord's life upon earth: if we may venture to point to one portion more than another, as illustrating that of which S. Paul speaks, when he describes the Lord Jesus Christ as *making Himself of no reputation, and taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men*, I think it is the birth to which we should point. The helplessness of the cradle and the cries of infancy seem more amazing than the sufferings of manhood. At all events, our view of these latter must be most imperfect, if it does not embrace the former. We do not adequately estimate what is meant by the condescension and self-abasement of the Son of God, unless we regard the first entrance upon the scene of His redeeming work as in itself a transcendent act of humility, and as the pledge and foretaste of all that followed. It may be said, that the redeeming work began before, that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world; and

so indeed it was; but the mystery was kept secret, or only hinted at obscurely by type and sacrifice and prophecy; it was in the *birth of Christ* that the mystery was revealed; *then* the purposes of eternity began to be worked out under the conditions of time; then commenced that life of the Son of God upon the earth in the form of a finite man, concerning which we may use, if concerning anything, the paradoxical expression of Tertullian, “Credo, quia impossibile.” Now I refer to these things, not because they are new, but because they are important; I am sure that however often we celebrate Christmas, and however often we hear the announcement of this day’s Epistle, we cannot exhaust the thoughts suggested by the consideration of the nature and being of that Lord, whom we hail as at hand: and I am sure that we cannot over-estimate the importance of such thoughts, because it is only in the perception of the true nature and being of Him whose Advent we celebrate, that we can rightly understand the importance of the work which He came to do. The doctrine of the essential deity of Him, whose birth into this world we are preparing to celebrate, is to be held by us as the corner-stone of our faith, not merely because it is necessary to hold it in

order that we may reverence Him who comes to us in great humility as He ought to be revered, not merely on the general ground that if true it must be of necessity a truth of infinite magnitude, but because also we have (so far as I can perceive) no other measure than this of the greatness of the work which He came to do. We say that He came to *redeem* us, and the very word implies bondage and misery: and when we look upon the condition of our race, we see enough to persuade us that there is something of the nature of bondage and misery in the world; we see marks of another lord besides the one eternal God; we find no internal evidence of divines having made a mistake, when they tell us of a spiritual fall, of the human race being in a condition of disease, of a mystery of sin which rests upon and obscures the face of the earth. Many tell us moreover that they find in their own experience much which is in accordance with this gloomy view; and the idea of a Saviour seems to answer to something in the human heart; and the Gospel, which is based upon the birth in Bethlehem, proves its adaptation to our wants by being so thoroughly a Gospel which can be preached to the poor. But when we endeavour to estimate the bondage and misery, of which I have been

speaking, when we ask ourselves what is that from which we have been saved, when we attempt to measure either the curse of sin or the blessing of redemption, then we find it necessary to recur to the thought of the divine being of that mighty One, upon whom our help has been laid by God; we are sure that the work must have been great, which required such an agent as this; the humility of Him, who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself and condescended to be born as one of our race, is at once the measure of the depth to which that race had fallen, of the glory to which through His power it may be raised, and (if it can be measured at all) the measure of the love of God towards mankind. I was going to have added, that it ought also to be the measure of our love towards Him, and of that joy of which S. Paul speaks in the text, and of our efforts to attain to that practical godliness of which he also speaks as a preparation for the coming of the Lord; but it would be incorrect thus to express myself; we may measure thus the love of God, we require nothing upon so large a scale to measure the return which we can make for that love; but this is true, that the condescension of Christ, as seen in the light

of His divine nature, is the best proof to us that all our love to Him and our joy in His Advent must infallibly be deficient, and that all we can do must be inconsiderable and worthless, as compared with the obligations under which we have been laid by that, which, in His infinite mercy, He has done for us.

Thoughts such as these, Christian brethren, seem to be appropriate in anticipation of Christmas-day. But, as I have said, it is according to the principle adopted throughout the Advent services of the Church to regard the words of the text in their relation, not only to the coming of Christ in humility, but also to His coming in glory. May I be permitted then to carry your minds forward to that event, of which the Church has always spoken as near at hand, of which the Church still speaks in the like tone, and to which we appear to be instructed as faithful servants of Christ to look forward continually, however fools may scoff? If I do thus in a few words endeavour to carry your minds forward to the promised return of the Lord, it is in no spirit of wishing to determine times and seasons which the Father hath kept in His own hand; the very principle of the faith implied in the words, *The Lord*

is at hand, seems to forbid us to speculate upon times and seasons, and so to run the risk of losing ourselves in the mazes of unfulfilled prophecy. If we speculate as to *when* Christ will come, then we put His Advent definitively into the future, and virtually deny that *the Lord is at hand*; regarded as an announcement, the value of which is to be measured by its effect upon the heart and upon the conduct, we indefinitely injure the force of the emphatic words of the text, if we ask concerning the promised Advent, when shall it be? we only regard it aright when we abolish time altogether, and say that it is surely at hand, and that it may be all but present. Therefore I would rather turn away from this view of the subject, and take that purely practical one, which alone (I think) is useful. When our Lord spoke of His Advent in the days of His flesh, referring immediately to His Advent to judge Jerusalem, but no doubt describing by a parable His other Advent to judge the world, He laid great stress upon the manner in which many would be taken by surprise, and the danger of not being found prepared; He referred for illustration to the days of Noah, when men planted and builded, and bought and sold, and married and gave in marriage, and then were swept away by the flood;

He referred also to the suddenness of the destruction of Sodom, where the people were in like manner following their own ways until Lot was safe, and the fire came down from Heaven. It is clear that the intention of the Lord was to represent this suddenness of His Advents as their peculiar mark; no one may calculate the time of them; they are as a thief in the night; those are blessed who are found ready, those to be pitied who are unprepared. Can we do better than look at the future Advent of Christ in the glass which He has thus Himself held up for us? If Christ were to come now, what would He see? What would be the condition of the world at large? How many nations would He find to whom His Name had never been preached, and what would be the proportion of those who know Him to those who know Him not? What meed of praise would be deserved by His Church for having obeyed His parting command to evangelize the world? And would there be no ground for comparing many of us to that unprofitable servant, who hid his master's talent in the earth? Mahometanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, idolatry,—count up the votaries of all these forms of religion, and consider what kind of tale their number would tell to Him, who

commanded that men should be baptized in *His* Name, and taught to seek the Father through Him! Then also, if you think of those portions of the earth which are professedly within the pale of the Church, what kind of sight do we find for the eye of the Saviour there? Does not the mysterious question asked by the Lord Himself force itself upon our minds, *When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth?* The chillness of death seems to have settled upon the greater portion of the East, and in the West there is deep-seated disease; tremendous errors in doctrine canonized as true; the mediatorial throne of the Son of God taken from Him, and given to another, and in a degree to thousands; and how many errors more? The Son of Man, if He came now in glory, would see all this with the eye of a judge; and I do not know that there would be much less to offend His pure and holy eye in those parts of His nominal Church, in which all pretence of faith has been exploded, and the name of Christianity assumed for a cold and hungry rationalism. But the dead must bury their dead: what would Christ find *here?* what, I mean, would He find within the limits of the English Church, in which, whether we use them to the best purpose or not, certainly

we enjoy rare privileges and blessings? Thank God, I believe that many would be found humbly waiting for His coming, and prepared to meet Him; many whose quietness and confidence would prove their strength; many exerting themselves simply and earnestly to prepare the way of the Lord, and who would be able to say when Christ appeared, *Nunc dimittis*, now we may depart in peace. But besides these humble pious souls, I should expect that there would be much that would be unfitting for the eye of Christ. I fear that it would be proved, on an examination before His tribunal, that although there is a very considerable amount of superficial piety, the principles of His religion have not thoroughly penetrated the mass of English society, and leavened the whole lump. If the Lord were again to walk amongst us as of yore, He would again (I fear) have to call His disciples around Him upon some spot raised above the ordinary low level of the world, and again open His mouth, and teach them those simple principles of a godly life, which He once taught in His Sermon on the Mount. I know that it is an ungracious task thus to criticize the condition of our own country, and our own time; I would not willingly underrate the good, or overrate the bad; I am sure

that there is abundance of sincere piety, where I know of none; yet even I know, and I suppose we all know, enough of what the Spirit of Christ has done in forming characters upon the model of His own, to enable us to say of a certainty that He has not left His Church altogether; and it would be pleasant to think that the condition of society is better than it is, or almost as good as it need be; but oh! if the words of Christ be true, and if there be any meaning still left in what He said concerning a narrow road which leads to life, and a broad road which does *not* lead there, how can we take comfortable views of the condition of society, and persuade ourselves that the many are going right, and that all would be as well as could be wished if Christ were now to come?

Society! it is no impertinent question for us to ask, What judgment would Christ form of the society, in which we ourselves move, by the stream of which we are more or less drifted one way or the other, and by contact with which our own characters are more or less formed. But in the vast society, which we may fancy to be brought before the judgment-seat of Christ, there is for each of us one figure of overwhelming interest; and that figure is his own. Christ first brought home to the

conscience of men the great truth of their personal responsibility before God; *What shall it profit a man*, said Christ, *if he gain the whole world, and lose himself?* And therefore I venture, Christian brethren, in closing my inquiry as to what Christ would find if He now came upon earth, to suggest that each of us should examine the accounts of that one only servant, whose thoughts and deeds he is able to some extent to know. Let each man endeavour to get through that outer casing of the heart, which hides much of its action from the observation of others, and is apt to hide much of it even from himself; let him lay bare his principles and motives in the sight of God, and determine, as an honest man, whether they be such as he would like to expose to that eye, which once withered with its glance the Scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites; in one word, let him judge himself, that so he may not be judged of God.

Thus only is it possible to fulfil the command of S. Paul in the text, that we should always rejoice in the Lord. I am sure that all rejoicing, which does not arise from active and earnest preparation, must be poor and empty and unprofitable; and if I might be permitted upon this occasion, which to myself is one of no ordinary interest, to refer for

a moment to the principle of that teaching, which it has been my privilege to deliver in this place, I would desire that it might be described as the enforcement of practical preparation for the coming of Christ. This day I speak for the last time from this pulpit as a resident in Cambridge; and on such an occasion I feel unable to get free from solemn thoughts concerning the character of that ministry, which here I have exercised. It is no personal question; there are hundreds throughout the country, engaged in the ministry of Christ and the preaching of His Gospel, who have been, to a great extent, affected by my ministry here. In the nature of things, no one can be so fully aware of the manifold defects of that ministry as I am myself; but this I may say with truth—and I think it right to say as much—that I have never (God is my witness) abused my position for party purposes, or intentionally preached any system of doctrine narrower than that, upon which the Church of England is based. Above all, I have ever striven to bind close together faith and practice, and to point to simple obedience, and earnest walking in God's ways, and self-denying efforts for the sake of our brethren, as the safest guide through the mazes of this world, and the best protection against the

dangers by which we are sure to be beset. I add no more. But perhaps I may be justified in taking this opportunity of expressing my sense of the exceeding consideration and kindness, which I have experienced for so many years in this beloved scene of my education and my ministry: and certainly I should not do justice to my own feelings, if I did not conclude with some such words as those which immediately follow my text, and pray that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!"

THE END.

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Cambridge:

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p. 105, l. 10, *for substance read subject.*

I.

PARTIES IN THE CHURCH.

PREACHED ON QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.



1 CORINTHIANS XL. 18.

When ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

THE present condition of the Church of England leads me to believe that we may with advantage turn our thoughts to those divisions of which St Paul had heard as existing in the Church of Corinth. If any one should say of us, as St Paul said of the Corinthians, "I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it," we should feel persuaded that he was speaking sarcastically. "Partly believe it!" Nay, we might say, there is no room for the most charitable doubt. Of course you cannot avoid believing it; every newspaper, every periodical, every religious

meeting, makes doubt impossible : nothing can be more certain, and more deplorable, than the fact that divisions do exist in the Church of England, and that they weaken her hands for good, make her future gloomy, and encourage her enemies both ghostly and bodily. On this day, therefore, upon which we have prayed God our Father to “send into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity,” I propose to say something to you concerning these deplorable divisions. I cannot exhaust the subject; unfortunately it is too extensive: yet it may be possible to make a few remarks which may be practically useful, and this with God’s help I will endeavour to do; and I will introduce them by referring to the analogous case of divisions in the Church of Corinth, which was censured by St Paul.

1. Observe, in the first place, that these divisions were emphatically “*in the Church.*” St Paul says, “When ye come together *in the Church*, I hear that there be divisions among you.” The words sound as though *the Church* stood, as in modern phraseology, for the *build-*

ing in which Christians worship. This, however, is not so: the phrase refers rather to the assembly than to the place of assembling—to the spiritual body, and not to the room which contains it: but the point is not material; that which is material is the fact that the divisions which St Paul censured were not such as separated Christians into two or more bodies, not like the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, or like that between England and Rome, or even like that which separates the Church of England from the nonconforming bodies: the divisions were strictly internal: the men who were divided were men, who worshipped together in the same body, used the same ministrations, partook of the same sacraments. And so we have an instance in Apostolic times of that kind of division which we deplore amongst ourselves; and if the examination of this primitive example does not make our own divisions more excusable, it at least renders them less astonishing.

2. But perhaps the Corinthians were di-

vided only upon some minor points. Not so. Their divisions touched the head and crown of Christian worship—namely, the Communion of the Lord's Body and Blood. I do not intend to insinuate that anything at all resembling or foreshadowing modern controversies had showed itself in those early days. The abuses of the Church of Corinth seem to have been practical rather than doctrinal, and to have belonged to a gross type of profanity, which happily would be impossible amongst ourselves. Nevertheless it is not a little remarkable that these early divisions should have been connected with an ordinance which was intended to be the bond of Christian unity, and that it should have been necessary for an Apostle to protest against errors connected with that solemn service which the Lord Jesus Christ instituted Himself.

3. These divisions, however, did not stand alone: they were coexistent with others of a somewhat different kind. The Corinthians had a great tendency to split into parties under special names: one party were for Paul, another for Apollos, another for Peter; while some

claimed, as belonging to *them*, that name which we might have supposed would be admitted to be the common property of all, the most holy name of Christ. Strange it may seem that such schisms should have divided a Church founded by an Apostle, and in the lifetime of the founder; but not so strange when we consider that the tendency to party spirit is inherent in human nature, and that the results which manifested themselves in the Church of Corinth have manifested themselves ever since in every age and in every branch of the Church of Christ.

4. But observe that these divisions and parties were coexistent also with several spiritual phenomena of a very different kind.

For example. The Corinthian Church was conspicuous for its spiritual gifts. Besides such gifts as those of wisdom, knowledge, faith, which we may trust are perennial in the Church of Christ, St Paul enumerates others of a more special and apparently transient character: gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of

tongues, the interpretation of tongues. He speaks of all these as though they were familiar to the Corinthian Church; and he does not disparage them, does not deny their value and the demonstration which they conveyed of the favour of God and the present operation of the Holy Ghost; but, curiously enough, the whole subject is introduced for the purpose of warning the Corinthians against the abuse of God's gifts. That same evil spirit, which made men divide themselves into parties under the names of Peter and Paul, made them also into partizans with respect to their Christian privileges and means of grace. They were unable to perceive that God gave one gift to one man and another gift to another, just as He gives one office to the hand and another to the foot and another to the head in the same body: they forgot that all gifts were given that men might profit withal: they were unable to merge their differences of station and function and privilege in the one foundation fact which supported them all—namely, the common redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ. And so the

high spiritual endowment of the Corinthian Church has been recorded and made known to us, not because it bore good fruit and left glorious results for Christendom, but just because it bore the fruit of dissension and strife, and because the religious world of Corinth forgot the paramount claims of charity.

Again: the divisions at Corinth were coexistent with a fault of a very different kind, namely, a tremendous and deadly scepticism. While some were disputing concerning high spiritual gifts, there were others who ventured to call in question the doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead. We all know the manner in which St Paul dealt with this terrible denial of Christian hopes; and I think that it is almost impossible to attend a funeral and listen to the portion of Scripture which is appointed for the lesson, without a feeling of wonder and thankfulness that God should have turned this case of primitive infidelity into the occasion of so glorious an exposition of the doctrine of the Resurrection: but the point with which I am concerned is simply the existence of infidelity

upon a point so fundamental and so vital,—infidelity, moreover, apparently so widely spread and so likely to become extensively mischievous,—infidelity which St Paul deemed worthy of a laboured argument, in order that it might be once for all utterly smothered and destroyed. I do not know that there was any organic connection between this infidelity and the divisions of which I have been speaking: perhaps there was, perhaps not: but anyhow the two things existed together; and so we arrive at this fact, which it may be well for us to reflect upon, namely, that it is possible for one set of persons in a Church to be contending earnestly or even furiously concerning the highest doctrines, splitting it may be theological hairs, quoting one apostle against another, and all fully persuaded that some terrible thing will happen if their views be not adopted and approved, while another set of persons in the same church are doubting the very elements of Christian doctrine, and making shipwreck concerning the first principles of the faith.

Once more: the condition of things of which

I have been speaking in the Corinthian Church was consistent and coexistent with disputes about minute points of ritual. St Paul was compelled to deal with such points: he was called upon to decide concerning the covering and uncovering of the head, when men and women prayed or prophesied: the decision was that the man's head should be uncovered, the woman's covered; and St Paul gave reasons for his decision; but, apparently doubting whether his reasons would convince every caviller, he took another ground, the general custom of the Churches, and so abruptly dismissed the question. "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God¹." In truth the Apostle had more important matters with which to deal; and he must have felt anxious to dispose quickly of a question concerning a vestment, when he knew that he had on hand such matters as the due administration of a Sacrament, and the doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead; he felt anxious to dispose of it, but disposed of it must be; it

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 16.

might be a trifle, but it was just one of those trifles which might be unduly magnified, and might increase the divisions of the Church.

On the whole then we have in the Church of Corinth, as its condition comes before us in St Paul's Epistles, the picture of strong party feeling and considerable internal division, co-existent with much spiritual pretension, much religious hollowness, a strong current of infidelity, and a tendency to contentiousness upon small points of ritual. Let me remind you further that Corinth was itself a place of singular wealth and luxury, a centre of commerce, a museum of art, and that its Church would be almost certain to suffer from those diseases which belong to a condition of too great prosperity: there was at this time apparently none of the bracing atmosphere of persecution: the Church was undergoing none of that severe discipline, which tends to strengthen faith and knit more closely the bonds of love, and force men to forget smaller differences in the grand unity of a common salvation. And all this being so, I ask whether we may not see in the

Church of Corinth a rather striking picture of our own Church of England, and one which we may study with some profit? I ask you especially to study it to-day, because the Epistle of this morning's service has exhibited to us one of the great results of the troubles and dissensions at Corinth, namely, St Paul's homily upon Charity: one feels that the sins of the Corinthians ought almost to be forgotten in the contemplation of this blessed though unintended fruit: and the homily on Charity is given as a lesson to-day, as though to suggest to us when entering upon the Lenten season, that the most earnest exercise of religion is no substitute for Charity, and no guarantee against the breach of it,—as though to teach us still more generally, that attention to the outward demands of religion, nay the existence in the heart of real sentiments of piety, and even the possession of great gifts and graces, are compatible with the bitterest feelings of party and the saddest neglect of the laws of brotherly love. With St Paul's homily on charity therefore in your minds, Christian Brethren, I invite you to study

the picture of the divisions in the Corinthian Church with special reference to the divisions which exist in our own.

Now amongst the Corinthians there were followers of Paul, of Apollos, of Peter: and amongst ourselves there are not unfrequently parties which take their name from some supposed leader: but it would manifestly be inconvenient to discuss this form of party in the pulpit: it will be more convenient, and sufficient for my purpose, to regard parties with reference to names attached to them, whether by friends or enemies, as badges of religious opinion. Let us take an example; and I think I can choose no better than that which is supplied by the three names which we so often hear,—High Church, Low Church, Broad Church. Let us examine a little into the party division supposed to be expressed by these three familiar names.

And first, let me observe that, if I object to these or the like names, it is not because I believe that all men can think on the subject of religion, or any other moral subject,—per-

haps on any subject whatever,—precisely in the same way. Men have their biasses by nature: their thoughts take different directions even from the nursery: their minds are different just as their faces are different, agreeing in certain general laws, but varying infinitely in details. Possibly it may be said with truth that men are born Platonists or Aristotelians, Nominalists or Realists, Devotional or Practical, Contemplative or Active,—just as they are born Poetical or Unpoetical, Musical or Unmusical, Mathematical or Unmathematical, and the like. And these cradle distinctions are fixed, rather than removed, by education and the influences of life: men are affected by such circumstances as these,—the country to which they belong, the school in which they pass their boyhood, the University in which they are educated: not to mention all those providential differences between one man and another, the character of parents, the joys and sorrows of childhood, the influence of companions, and other moral forces, which it is impossible to enumerate or to classify: and so the result is

that men are different from each other, and always will be so: and even upon such a subject as the Christian Faith, in which there is so much that lies altogether out of the region of human speculation and reasoning, it is only possible to produce the result of all men appearing to think alike by a common understanding and agreement not to think at all. Men must, as we say, agree to differ,—not differ in all things, as though there were no standard of truth and no revelation from God, but differ in their modes of viewing truth, and in the subjective colouring put by their own minds upon the one objective truth of God. This kind of difference existed even amongst the Apostles. The Corinthians no doubt were to blame, when, in their party zeal, they followed some Paul, and some Apollos, and some Peter; and modern divines have been to blame when they have exalted St Paul at the expense of St James: still the behaviour both of the Corinthians and of modern divines is intelligible: no one can read the Apostolic writings without perceiving how easy it is to set up one against

another. St Paul and St James may be contrasted instead of harmonized; St John may be preferred to St Paul; St Luke may be represented as a partizan; the fourth Gospel may be treated as opposed to the other three; the differences in tone and treatment are patent, and men can turn them to evil account if they please. What the differences ought to teach us is I think this,—that divine truth *will* ever be coloured by the human media through which it is refracted to us, and that consequently God is pleased to use several media, which we may combine and cement together by what is termed the analogy of faith, so as to gain by the combination as nearly as we may the pure achromatic light of Heaven.

I acknowledge therefore freely that it is impossible for men, if they think at all, to think exactly in the same way. But then there is such a thing as minimizing differences, and seeking for points of contact, and sinking smaller distinctions in the united acknowledgment of great foundation truths: and on the other hand it is possible to stereotype differ-

ences which might have been transient, to deepen lines of separation, to exaggerate the importance of controversial distinctions. Let us notice what has taken place with regard to those three party names which I have already cited. They were, I believe, made permanent and emphatic in the Church of England, at all events unwonted attention was called to them, by an ingenious article published some years ago in the *Edinburgh Review*¹. The writer of that article assumed that the whole of the clergy could be ranged in three classes: he subdivided these classes, so as still further to distinguish the schools of clerical opinion, and then with an unfortunate ingenuity he concluded by assorting the whole body of the clergy into his classes and subdivisions. This he contrived to do by first ticketing all those whom he knew personally, and of whose opinions therefore he felt competent to form a judgment; and then, assuming that his own friends were a fair sample of the clergy in general, he had manifestly sufficient data for

¹ See Appendix, Note A.

determining the magnitude of each of the parties into which he was pleased to divide the Ministers of the Church. It is obvious that the process was uncertain and likely to be fallacious, but with this I am not now concerned; what I object to is the attempt to perform such a process; I object to any pretence that it is right or possible to divide the Ministers of the Church into classes having sharply defined differences; I object to be so classified myself, and I do not wish that that should be done to others which I regard as an insult and a wrong when done to me. Why cannot I be a Churchman, without any adjective at all,—*high* as the Church is high, *low* as the Church is low, *broad* as the Church is broad?

Moreover, there is this evil arising from the neat tripartite classification against which I am making my protest,—namely, that people are tempted to assume, and often do assume, that the division is so complete and exhaustive that if a man does not belong to the first party nor to the second, then he *must* by logical and inevitable necessity belong to the third. Are

you a High Churchman? No. Are you a Low Churchman? No. Alas! then Broad you must be: and probably he who asks the questions finds something unspeakably awful in this alternative.

In truth, the terms High and Low and Broad, when applied to Church principles and opinions, must in the nature of things be metaphorical, and their meaning is that which the persons who use them choose to assign to them. Their meaning may be good; it may be much the contrary. For example, I apprehend that frequently the names are taken somewhat in the following manner. It is tacitly assumed that Romanism and Protestant Dissent are the opposite poles of a certain line of thought, that High Churchmen tend to the first, Low Churchmen to the second; so that by logical necessity a High Churchman, if he be only high enough, will become a Romanist, and a Low Churchman, if he be only low enough, will sink into some form of Protestant dissent. And if a man's standpoint cannot be found in this line, then it is concluded that

it *must* be somewhere upon an infinite plane which crosses it, and in which he may easily be lost altogether. Now if this be the way in which the terms of which I am speaking are regarded, and popularly I believe they frequently *are* so regarded, then the result is most mischievous: each term becomes a term of reproach, and there is only a choice of evils: for it would seem as if no English Churchman could venture to follow out his principles to their legitimate consequences: a High Churchman is on the way to Rome; a Low Churchman is on the way to dissent; and a Broad Churchman is a hopeless wanderer—on the way—I hardly know whither.

This would indeed be a terrible condition of things, but I venture to assert that it is an imaginary one: I assert that it is possible for an English Churchman to be unattached to any party, and to be committed to no principle which he may not loyally carry out to its legitimate consequences; nay further, I believe that if the terms be rightly interpreted, every Churchman may be and ought to be at

once High and Low and Broad. For a man may hold strong views with regard to that clause in the Creed which speaks of "one Catholic and Apostolic Church;" he may have been led to form a high estimate of the Church's powers and functions, of her duty in dispensing the Sacraments, of her dignity as the living body of Christ: and regarding the Church of England as a member of this Church Catholic, a man who holds these views may rightly be called a *High Churchman*, and he will be called so in company with such men as Hooker, and Jeremy Taylor, and George Herbert, and Bull, and Blunt, and Mill. But then a High Churchman of this stamp is by no means pledged to put the Church in a false position by forgetting the Lord who redeemed her, and the Holy Spirit who sanctifies her: true, there was a phase of Churchmanship which seemed to do this; the dreary Churchmanship of the last century, which identified the Church with the Establishment, and her prosperity with the safety of her tithes, and which reduced her orthodoxy to a feeble and ineffectual morality,

—this kind of Churchmanship did seem to belong to a Church without a Christ, and to men who had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost: and when those doctrines of grace, which were identified with the names of such men as Wesley, and Venn, and Scott, and Newton, and Simeon, were once more preached, no wonder that they seemed incompatible with High Churchmanship, and that Low Churchman and Evangelical came to mean the same thing. But I want to know what real antagonism there is between the two views? If it be the Creed of the Low Churchman that Jesus Christ must be all in all, that nothing must stand between the sinner and his Saviour, that the influence of the Holy Ghost is needed to sanctify each human soul, and that 'Christ Himself is greater than His Church, greater than Church ordinances, greater than Church Ministers, and that the Church must not be so magnified as to eclipse her Lord,—then what is there in this Creed which a High Churchman is not bound and willing to hold? And once more: may not

a man hold views which would justify his position amongst High Churchmen, and his position amongst Low Churchmen, and yet not prevent him from sympathising with what may fairly be called Broad Church views? Of course there is an offensive sense which identifies such views with mere indifference to dogmatic truth, and with these no earnest Churchman can have any sympathy; but surely in a pure and legitimate sense the Church of England is herself *broad*: she has shrunk from needless definitions: retaining essentials, she has given wide liberty in details: the very fault that some find with her is this, that she is *too* broad, *too* comprehensive, *too* tolerant, *too* capable of being made a common home and resting-place for a motley multitude of weary heavy laden souls. Yet if it *be* a fault, one may well believe that it will be gently regarded by Him who said, "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest¹:" and whether fault or not,

¹ St Matt. xi, 28.

a man may surely be broad as the Church of England is broad, and be a good Churchman still.

Hence I would venture to express a hope that the divisions in the Church of England, bad as they are, are not so wide or so deep as they are sometimes supposed to be. Party men no doubt there are amongst us, but there is a large mass of men who own no party leader but Christ, and no party name but His: I would that any words of mine could ⁱⁿcrease their number. That men, if they think at all, must upon many subjects think differently I have already allowed, and I am aware also that at the present time there are causes at work which tend to throw into more than usual prominence the differences between one Christian and another; but that is all the more reason why we should try to bring together those who can be brought together, why we should shrink from exaggerating points of difference, why we should search for broad grounds of agreement, and endeavour as much as possible to illustrate the grace of Charity. "Never shall I forget,"

says a distinguished living writer¹, "the deep despondency of a Hindu convert, a real martyr to his faith, who had pictured to himself from the pages of the New Testament what a Christian country must be, and who when he came to Europe found everything so different from what he had imagined in his lonely meditations at Benares:"—*so* different! Who can wonder? Who could not almost weep with vexation and shame?

For while Christians are contending with each other,^{*} and the Church is divided, and questions are being keenly discussed, from the colour and shape of a vestment up to the highest mysteries of the faith, Satan pursues his work with a terrible unity of purpose, and with all the advantages of an undivided command. What might not the Church of England do, if this same unity of practical purpose were hers? What might she not do, what victories might she not gain, if all her children, forgetting their differences, would make a cool, lasting, well-sup-

¹ Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I. Preface, p. xxvi.

ported attack upon the powers of evil under Christ their common Lord? And if, being of one mind, and knit together in charity, we set ourselves to work to correct what is amiss, to strengthen what is weak, and to reform whatever needs reform in our own government and practice and discipline, what might we not hope with regard to the attractive power of the Church upon the various Christian communities round about her?

Is all this chimerical? Am I as one who beats the air, when I speak of the possibility of healing the divisions by which our Church is rent? It may be so: but at least I must declare my solemn conviction that the best hopes of Christendom are bound up with the Church of England, and that the best hopes of the Church of England are to be found in unity. And therefore I would say to you, Christian Brethren,—and especially to you my young Christian Brethren, who in the course of a few years will have so much influence upon the current of English thought and feeling, and the sight of whom brings back to my mind the re-

membrance of my own happiest days,—I would say, strive to strengthen and increase this unity: eschew the spirit of party: be tolerant of difference of opinion: and endeavour to stand upon the broad common ground of allegiance and love to the same Redeemer and membership in the same Church! And so may God be with you! Amen.

II.

USE AND ABUSE OF LIBERTY.

PREACHED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT:

A Collection made for the Cambridge National Schools.

1 PETER II. 16.

As free, and not using your liberty as a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

THE Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is a proclamation and a charter of liberty. It proclaims freedom from the bondage of sin, in virtue of free pardon purchased by the precious blood of Christ. It proclaims freedom from the precepts of the Old Covenant, with its painful sacrifices and its burdensome ritual and its imperfect channels of grace; and it substitutes a New and better Covenant conveying grace much more abundantly, and resting upon the one great Sacrifice of the Cross. It proclaims freedom from human oppression by asserting the brotherhood of mankind, in

virtue of our common relationship to Him, who became man and took upon Him the nature of us all. And thus, with regard both to this world and the world to come, with regard to our condition as citizens and our condition as members of Christ's Church, nay, with regard to every light in which we can consider ourselves, as spiritual creatures, it may be said that Christ came to make us free. Therefore we are not surprised when we find our Lord opening His Ministry in the Synagogue of Nazareth by reading a passage from the Book of the prophet Isaiah, which speaks of One anointed by the Spirit of God "to preach deliverance to the captives¹:" and we can understand the energy with which He assured the Jews who boasted of their freedom that they could have no real liberty except through Him, and that "if the Son set them free they should be free indeed²:" we can appreciate also the emphasis with which St Paul entreated his converts to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free³," as well as

¹ St Luke iv. 18.² St John viii. 36.³ Gal. v. 1.

the tenderness with which he comforts Christian slaves with the assurance that they were free in Christ.

But of course liberty may be abused: this possibility is involved in the very nature of liberty. Adam fell just because he was free. A man cannot steal if you shut him up in prison: he cannot pick a pocket if his hands be tied. The freedom of action, which is essential to all that is noble and great and good, introduces by necessary consequence the potentiality of doing that which is base and mean and bad. And so it is possible for men to abuse the free pardon offered to sinners through the blood of Christ, and to say "Let us sin, that grace may abound:" and instead of obedience sanctified and strengthened by a sense of Christ's infinite love, we may have the vile result of antinomian licentiousness: and men may abuse the civic freedom, which has grown out of the broad principles of the Christian religion, by fretting under the most reasonable restraints and forgetting that there is such a virtue as submission, and that there are such

institutions as “powers ordained of God:” and freedom of religious thought and of intellectual speculation upon sacred subjects may degenerate into mere unbridled freethinking, and may become popularly identified with infidelity.

This being so, we cannot wonder that the New Testament should contain such words as those of St Peter in the text. Those words recognize the use and the abuse of Christian liberty: they enforce the one, they condemn the other. “As free,”—that is the Christian’s birthright: “and not using liberty for a cloke of maliciousness”—*κακία*, I presume meaning thereby any evil purpose, and not exclusively that which we understand by *malice*,—“but as the servants of God.” That is to say, however complete the emancipation of men through Christ may be,—and who would wish to limit the completeness of the emancipation?—still it does not interfere with the higher condition of service due to God: ~~δοῦλοι Θεοῦ~~—servants or slaves of God: His absolutely and unconditionally, purchased for Him by the precious blood of His dear Son, made free from Satan

and sin and self, and all other lords who might have claimed dominion over us, by being made the servants of Him "whose service is perfect freedom."

Now this Apostolic teaching on the subject of liberty goes to the very root of the matter: it is simple, and yet it is deeply philosophical: it asserts the value of freedom: it warns us that it may be abused: it declares that the remedy against the abuse of liberty is to be found in acknowledging one true and rightful Lord and in obeying Him.

It seems to me, Christian Brethren, that there are scarcely any people upon the face of the earth, who require more than Englishmen a warning on the use and abuse of liberty. Liberty is the very atmosphere of the land. Our public schools, for instance, are conducted upon the principle of trusting boys with an astonishing amount of discretion and free agency, which may, of course, easily be abused for the purposes of idleness and ignorance. Our Universities are conducted upon much the same principle; and here also, though liberty affords

room for the growth of all that is most noble and manly, yet at the same time it may be abused so as to produce the result of terrible waste of time and loss of golden opportunities. Then again, our press is free; I suppose it is one of the few that really are so; and I need not enlarge upon the privileges and the perils of a free press. Our Constitution is free, for we are practically governed by an assembly of men chosen by ourselves. And our mouths and our actions are free, so that men can meet together as they please, and discuss any subject they please, and say anything short of actual sedition upon any subject whatever. On the whole I believe that such an amount of real liberty was never enjoyed under any government since civilization began, as is enjoyed under the English constitution: some may think the liberty *too* great; but this is a question which I do not care to discuss; I *do* wish however in passing to remind you, that as Englishmen we have special reason to take to heart the warning of St Peter in the text, and to use our liberty without abusing it.

I refer to these our civil liberties chiefly for the purpose of introducing some considerations concerning liberty with respect to our spiritual, our religious, our ecclesiastical position. We are free as members of the English State, and we are bound not to abuse our liberty: we are free as members of the English Church, and the liberty which we so possess is equally a liberty which we are bound as the servants of God not to abuse. There are phenomena patent to the eye of every observer, which demonstrate that this is a subject worthy of being discussed at the present time. There is a certain tendency to lawlessness within the Church, a tendency to set up individual opinion against authority, and a tendency to press to the most outrageous extremes the right of private judgment and the privilege of free thought, which sometimes seem to render it doubtful, and do in fact make many good people doubt, whether it be possible much longer to maintain a Church, containing within itself such elements of discord and explosion, as in any real sense one living organic body. For myself I do not

despair concerning the Church of England: I know that there is another and much more hopeful side of the picture: but I do confess to very grave alarm with regard to the dangers that threaten her: it is not external enemies from whom she has so much to fear; these enemies, as I believe, are much fewer and much less violent than they have been: and if we could say of her as the Psalmist said of Jerusalem, (according to the phrase in the Prayer-book Version), "Jerusalem is built as a city, that is at unity in itself," we might smile at all hostile attempts, or rather we might feel almost certain that no hostile attempts would be made: but it is the mischief within that terrifies me; and I cannot but remember that when the Holy City did succumb finally and irrecoverably to her foes, it was not so much the Roman artillery as the want of subordination and the fierce factions within the walls, that paralyzed the arms of her champions, and brought on her abiding ruin. Hence it is with a solemn sense of the dangers to which our Church is exposed, and with the

hope of supplying some few useful thoughts upon one of the sources of those dangers, that I direct attention to the liberty which we enjoy, and the duty of not abusing it.

Now in speaking of the Church of England I shall speak of it only in its reformed condition: not because I wish to insinuate that the Church of England began her existence at the Reformation, but because the peculiar feature of our position, the liberty of which I am to speak as a thing which may be used and may be abused,—this liberty was the special fruit of the Reformation, and for good or for evil one of its most important results. I intend in my next sermon to say something concerning the Reformation, and therefore I shall refrain from doing so now, except to remark that the liberty which it introduced was manifold: it was a civil as well as a religious emancipation: it declared the Sovereign of this country to be supreme in her own dominions, and settled for ever the question of foreign interference: and it led by necessary consequence, though not immediately, to the full recognition

of the principle of religious liberty, that is, to the recognition of the right which every man has to worship God in that manner and in that society, which are most in accordance with his own mind and judgment. But neither of these liberties is a liberty within the Church, and therefore they do not come under my notice just now: what I intend to discuss is the effect of the Reformation within the Church, the liberty which we members of the Church of England enjoy, the liberty therefore which we may be tempted to abuse. And the principle which I wish to enforce is this,—that we are dealt with in the *Church* of England much in the same way as we are in the *Schools* of England, in the *Universities* and *Colleges* of England, and in the *Constitution* of England: that is to say, much is left to individual discretion, there is little of positive restraint, no suspicious watching, no ecclesiastical police; and confidence is placed in us that we will not abuse our liberty, and assume that we may with propriety do everything which we are not absolutely hindered from doing. Observe, it is not incum-

bent upon me to defend this condition of things as the best condition: I am not bound to defend the system of our Schools, or the freedom of our Press, or the principles of our Constitution: some may maintain that the principle of liberty is carried to an absurd extent, and that in many things we need more of control and of the principle of submission to authority: be it so: but the point is, not what things ought to be, but what they are, and how we ought to comport ourselves in that peculiar position in which it has pleased God to place us: and with regard to our position in the English Church, if our liberty be great, as it undoubtedly is, if it be too great, as some may be disposed to consider it, either way our duty is to take heed not to exaggerate it, not to misrepresent it, not to abuse it.

“As free”—yes: though we hear so much of the Church being in fetters, and though there is a sense in which the assertion is perfectly true, still she is in many points conspicuously free: and each department of freedom is, in the nature of things, also an occasion of peril. Let me instance a few of these points.

1. In the first place there is the general principle of what is called the Right of private judgment. A very sacred principle, when properly understood: it asserts, as I conceive, the personal responsibility of every human soul to God: it bids every man do that which he believes in his conscience to be right: it denies that one man can hide himself behind another, or behind a multitude, from that eye which looks into the heart and from that judge who rewards every man according to his works. But you may often see this right of private judgment treated in popular literature, not as a solemn imposition of responsibility, but as a mere removal of restraint: the Reformation is regarded as having given to every man the right to think exactly as he pleases: and the confusion is made between the absence of every attempt by human authority to coerce men's actions, and the propriety of those actions in themselves. And yet it might be remembered that even in civil matters the absence of legal prohibition is no proof that a thing is morally defensible: the law does not interfere with a

drunkard, if his indulgence of his vice does not interfere with public order: and sins of lust and passion are not legal crimes, except so far as they involve the infraction of a neighbour's rights: in fact, no one would be so absurd as to take for his moral standard of right that which is given by the interference or non-interference of human law. And so in spiritual matters, a man ought not to claim an unlimited right of private judgment, merely because he cannot be burnt as a heretic, and because he *can* hold any opinions or no opinions as he likes.

With regard however to the Church of England, it should be remembered that liberty of judgment, though wide, is not professedly unlimited. There are certain ancient boundaries, intended to keep us from wandering. For instance, there are the Creeds; and there is the appeal to primitive antiquity; and there are Articles of Religion; and, above all, we may see the living law and principles of the Church, exhibited in the most instructive and attractive form in the Book of Common Prayer. Now all these are for us restraints upon liberty:

some may regard them as improper restraints, but I think they judge foolishly. For myself, I welcome them as providential helps against the abuse of liberty: I value them as one values the bridle for the horse, or the breakman's van in a railway train: I should no more wish to get rid of them, than a kite would wish to snap its string: I should regard an absolute right of private judgment as equivalent to an absolute right to go which way I pleased, when left upon a mighty sea in a solitary boat.

2. Oh! it will be said, but Christians are not left in solitary boats. Christ is with them, as He was with His disciples in the storm upon the sea of Galilee. He speaks to them by the Holy Scriptures: and the principal glory of the Reformation in England was the publication in the freest and most unfettered form of the English Bible. This is in a certain sense true: the Church of England has appealed to Scripture, and has rightly considered that the highest privilege of a simple Christian is the opportunity of reading the Word of God in his mother tongue. But even here we may recognize

a liberty which is capable of being abused: the free use of the Bible does not mean unbridled license of interpretation: a man may not assume that the possession of a copy of a translation of the Holy Scriptures involves the right or the possibility of constructing a religion for himself. The Church of England has never sanctioned this notion: she deals with the Scriptures and with Scriptural dogma in the light of primitive antiquity: and I think that all the more recent phenomena of theological controversy tend more than ever to show the wisdom of the ground taken by her in the perilous struggles of the sixteenth century, or rather to suggest that she was guided by a wisdom higher than her own. Therefore, though it be perfectly true that every man is free to deal with the Holy Scriptures as he pleases, either to labour at them reverently and with all the appliances of learning, or to deal with them flippantly, or to pray over them, or to ridicule them, it is not true that the Church of England has ever committed herself to the principle that there is no peril in the free use

of the Bible. There *is* peril: and indeed I doubt whether there be any subject in which St Peter's caution is more worthy of being borne in mind.

3. But let me take an illustration of a different kind. On Wednesday last, being Ash-Wednesday, we used a service, in which we bewailed, as we have done annually for many years, the decay of discipline in the Church of England. The language of the service spoke of a revival of discipline as a thing "much to be wished:" perhaps we sympathized with the language; but I am sure that, whether we did or not, we must have felt that the revival was at least more to be wished than expected. Doubtless the general argument for Church discipline is irresistible: the right of exercising discipline seems to be inherent in the very idea of a society: every religious sect claims it, and justly so, even to the extent of excommunication: nay, the right seems to be recognized and enforced by the language of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself¹.

¹ St Matthew xviii. 15—18.

But then on the other hand the subject is so beset with difficulties, arising chiefly out of the fact that the Church of England is not and does not regard herself as a sect, but the Church of the whole nation, her position is so complicated by her union with the state, and Church privileges have become so mixed up with civil rights, that it seems almost hopeless in practice to think of returning to that condition of discipline, the loss of which we annually deplore. But be this as it may, we find ourselves in the Church of England in a condition of freedom from discipline and restraint, such as exists, I believe, in no Church and in no sect throughout the world: many people glory in it: it is just the theme for a grand panegyric upon English liberty in a dashing newspaper article: and it must be admitted, even by those who most deplore the abeyance of discipline, that things are not so bad as they seem: there are counteracting influences in our own times, especially there is the force of public opinion enlightened by Christian morality, which to a certain extent

takes the place of discipline, and which also would render great modifications necessary, if the ancient system, of which the Communion Service speaks, should ever be restored. Nevertheless, as things are, and as they are likely at present to remain, it seems clear to me that we have in the almost entire absence of Ecclesiastical discipline a dangerous liberty, one which may be easily abused, and one of which we do in fact see from time to time very deplorable results.

4. Let me add also, as connected with this subject of discipline, that members,—and especially *young* members,—of the Church of England, may be easily misled by the freedom which is involved in the absence of minute injunctions concerning their religious conduct. The Church of England has, rightly or wrongly, for the most part laid down principles, but abstained from full details of application: not only does she not enforce her precepts, but she leaves much to the judgment and conscience of her children with regard to the interpretation which her precepts are to bear. For in-

stance: she clearly enjoins fasting and abstinence: these forty days of Lent, upon which we have just entered, are an undeniable proof that she does so: every Friday in the year is marked by the same injunction, in memory of our dear Saviour's passion and the sacrifice offered upon the Cross for our sins. Nor will any one, who knows the wiles of Satan and the strength of human lusts and passions, doubt that these injunctions are imposed in sad and sober earnest. Nevertheless no details are given: nothing is said either of the strictness with which the precept is to be observed, or of the manner in which it is to be construed: all is left to the individual conscience, and if any one chooses to use his liberty to the utter neglect of the precept, there is nothing to prevent him from doing so. Again, with regard to private confession, concerning which much has been said in the course of the last few years, it is quite certain that the practice which makes confession a regular food of the spiritual life, has been advisedly abandoned by the Church of England: it is equally certain

that she has not entirely given up confession as a Christian privilege: she declines it as a food, she reserves it as a medicine, especially for a medicine for those who are bodily sick: and though for the whole she does not make confession a condition of communion, she exhorts those who are kept away from the Holy Table by a mind ill at ease to go to a "discreet and learned Minister of God's Word" and "open their griefs," that "by the Ministry of God's Word they may receive the benefit of absolution, together with spiritual counsel and advice." Therefore it is not true to say that there is no such thing as confession in the Church of England: the principle is asserted, and the general method of applying the principle is indicated: details are omitted: an almost unlimited freedom is left by the absence of specific commands: and because this is so, we have another instance of liberty which may be turned to good account, but which both priest and people must take heed not to abuse¹.

¹ See Appendix, Note B.

5. But I pass on to another illustration of my subject. Perhaps at the present time it may be regarded as the most important and most solemn to which reference can be made. I speak of that freedom of thought upon sacred subjects, which is claimed and exercised so abundantly by writers and thinkers in our days. I may add that special attention has been called to this question lately in a pamphlet published by Dr Hinds, the late Bishop of Norwich¹. Now there are three opinions which may be held in this matter: it may be said that freedom of thought should be permitted to none: or that it should be permitted to all: or that it should be permitted to the laity but denied to the clergy. Let me say a word as to the difference between the laity and the clergy. It is impossible to deny that the clergy have bound themselves by positive declarations of belief which the laity have not made, and therefore that they may be said to have to a certain extent fettered themselves

¹ See Appendix, Note C.

and sacrificed their natural freedom: to what extent this really has been done must, I think, be left very much to each man's conscience; but in the interest of the people at large, and of the cause of truth, I would urge that it is not wise to exaggerate this sacrifice of freedom. Nothing could be more calamitous than the acknowledgement, or even the suspicion, that clergymen entered upon every field of thought with judgment fettered and conclusions foregone: the more nearly clergy and laity can stand upon the same platform of thought the better: and perhaps it may be doubted, whether the difference between a conscientious Christian priest and a conscientious Christian layman be not chiefly this, that one has made public profession of that, which the other implicitly accepts: each has vows which he must not forget, and each has a liberty which he must not abuse.

How is a man to judge whether he has abused his liberty? The question is a very delicate one, and I do not think that any one can form a fair judgment except the man him-

self: a clergyman, for instance, must draw his own line between an enlightened exposition which shall make intelligible to his people the well ascertained results of Biblical scholarship, and a rash criticism which shall destroy their estimate of the Bible,—between a hearty recognition of scientific truth, and a sacrifice of truth to the supposed demands of science,—between the attitude of honest and humble investigation, and that of unbridled speculation. I do not see how any one can satisfactorily draw these lines except himself. But I think that a man may fairly believe that he has somehow abused his liberty, if he finds that what he has said or written has outraged the general religious sense of holy men: and I think also that we clergy must not be content with the standard given by a legal tribunal: a book may sin grievously in many ways, which human law cannot visit: its tone may be offensively flippant, it may suggest errors which it does not affirm: nay, paradoxical though it may seem, yet I believe it to be true, that a book may be all the more mischievous just because

it is not found possible to condemn it by human law.

With regard however to the general question, the most important point for consideration is this, that in a country and in a Church like our own free thought you must and will have. Look for example at this University: the whole system tends to freedom of thought: all our mathematical and classical and physical and other studies tend to make men think for themselves: what we dread is that young men should *not* think, that they should let their intellects lie fallow, that they should permit their minds merely to be crammed with other people's thoughts, and perhaps not many of them, and should simply try to gain the practice of producing some of those thoughts on demand. With such a system of education, in which candidates for the Holy Ministry and those looking forward to lay professions are all associated together in one body of students, it is absolutely impossible to prevent freedom of thought, even if we were foolish enough to wish it: the thing might be done in a *clerical semi-*

nary, it cannot be done in a *University*: you may keep a pond as stagnant as you please, but you cannot secure stagnation in an ocean, or even in an estuary which is in free communication with the sea. No: in a *University* there must be freedom of thought, and the habit of thinking acquired here must colour the whole of a man's future life. But on this very account it is desirable that young men should perceive the dangers, as well as the advantages, of the liberty which they enjoy: and it is desirable also that tutors should estimate aright the golden opportunity of impressing principles, that may serve as a protection against the perils which liberty undoubtedly involves. For in truth, one of the best lessons that older men can teach and younger men can learn is that which St Peter teaches in the text: to feel that we are free, to triumph in our freedom, and yet not to abuse it,—this is one of the grandest lessons that can be gained in any school of sound learning and religious education: it is not by straps and bands that the high-mettled steed can be prevented from

misusing his courage and his strength: these straps and bands may perhaps only chafe and irritate him: it is rather by cautious handling when young, by careful and gentle training, that security can be taken against the wantonness of power and the abuse of liberty. Therefore permit me to say to you, young Christian brethren, that there are two things which you have to learn to do here,—to use your minds vigorously, and to use them cautiously: to feel your freedom, and to learn not to abuse it: to grapple with the hard problems of human thought, and then to be humble simple and teachable in the presence of the mysteries of God.

[6. I am supplied with a concluding instance of liberty which must not be abused by the case of the National Schools, for which I have undertaken to ask your alms. Almsgiving of all kinds is free, free in the very nature of things: and yet he who claims his freedom as an argument for withholding more than is meet may well remember how easily the freedom may be abused, and that God has made us free

in order that we may be able to be generous. But especially with regard to the education of our poor brethren in Christ, there is a freedom which may be abused. Education in this country is voluntary. Perhaps it ought not to be so: perhaps it may be the duty of the State to see that every child is taught in some way or another: many persons think that this is so, but at present it has not been so decided; and therefore although the State comes in to assist voluntary efforts, it will do no more; and the responsibility of educating is ultimately thrown upon the principle of Christian brotherly love. Here then you are free: but I beseech you not to use your liberty for a cloke of un-Christian conduct: I know of old the difficulty of carrying on these Cambridge Schools: I remember when I was one of the Cambridge Clergy the frequent deficits, the schemes for enlarging our annual income, the grief which we felt at the apparent apathy of many in a matter in which we were labouring hard all the year round, and in which they were really as much concerned as ourselves: above all I remember the

distress and anxiety which we felt, whenever it was announced that there had been a bad collection at Great St Mary's. I entreat you not to let that result be repeated to-day: the true mark of liberty is to be liberal: freedom is twice blessed, when they give freely who have freely received: and he who knows what it is to be free in Christ, and what that freedom cost, will not refuse a petition, which is made on behalf of Christ's little ones, and for Christ's own sake.]

III.

*THE MESSAGE OF THE SPIRIT TO THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.*

REVELATION III. 22.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

THE Spirit of God speaks not merely to *the Church*, that is, to the Church Catholic for which you were just now bidden to pray, but also to *the Churches*. That is to say, in addition to those words of command and encouragement and rebuke which God speaks at sundry times and in divers manners to the whole body of those who bear the name of Christ, He speaks also to the several constituent societies of that body. They are not all similarly situated: what may suit one may not suit another: the lesson which one needs above all things, another may not require: one may be tempted towards speculative

heresy, and another may be dying of a lifeless orthodoxy: one may be selfish, and another may be lukewarm: one may have the advantages and disadvantages of an establishment, and another may have those of a free Church: and so on. Therefore God, who knows the needs of each Church, speaks words adapted to those needs, and exhorts those who have ears to hear. Thus it was that St John was commissioned to write to the seven Churches of Asia, to each one its message, to each one its warning. I suppose that the warnings might have been taken, and were not: I suppose that there were no ears open to hear what the Spirit said: at all events there was no hearing to good purpose: and so the seven Churches of Asia are gone: their candlesticks removed: scarcely a spark left to indicate those favoured spots of earth, where once the light of Christ burned so brightly.

This being so, it is well for us, if we have ears, to hear what the Spirit has said or is saying to the Church of England. The words may be distinct, though not written down by

an Apostle: though not so clear as those spoken to the Churches of Asia, they may be clear enough for practical guidance, and our very trial may consist in discerning what God says, in watching the leadings of His Providence, in noticing the current of events, in endeavouring sometimes to catch, amid the earthquake and storm and fire of human contentions and controversies and passions, the still small voice of Christ. Believing therefore that God has spoken to our own Church in past times, that He is speaking to her still, and that it is most important that God's message should be heard and understood, I venture to indicate the subject of this sermon by applying the text thus: "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the *Church of England*."

Now the subject thus indicated is manifestly a very extensive one: it includes the whole history of our Church: it is far too wide for a sermon. I shall contract it by directing your attention chiefly to two points, namely, the message of God to the Church of England at that period

of her history which we call the Reformation, and the message in our own times. These two are intimately bound up together: one cannot be discussed without the other: and they, who would understand for good practical purposes the message of God in our own times, ought to endeavour to form sober well-founded well-digested views of the great Reformation message, and of the manner in which the Church of England was influenced by it.

Of course such views can be gained only by careful study; and the guidance for such study belongs to the Professor's Lecture-room, and not to the University pulpit. Nevertheless there has been of late such a tendency in some quarters to disparage the Reformation, to deny its principles, to deplore its results, to decry some of those who took the most active part in it, that I have thought it well to attempt to deal with the subject in such manner as it can be dealt with in a sermon. Even the direction of attention to the subject may be not without its utility: and if I be unable to argue out the whole case, I may at least

remind you of some important truths, and may perhaps lead some to perceive more clearly than before that it is not without reason that they are bidden to pray, not only “for Christ’s Holy Catholic Church,” but also and “especially for that pure and reformed part of it established in this kingdom.”

I have spoken of the period of our Church’s history, which we call the Reformation. I have used this phraseology because it is difficult to fix precisely the date of the Reformation, to say when it began and when it was completed: just as it is difficult to say when night ends and day begins: the change from night to day varies in fact very much in different latitudes: in some parts of the earth you may have a sudden almost vertical rise of the sun in cloudless splendour, and in some the oblique transition through twilight and clouds may be so gradual that it may be impossible to mark any point of sudden change. Our Reformation in England was of this latter kind; something like our own ordinary sun-rises,—not very brilliant, not very sudden, not

very exciting, perhaps rather stormy: nevertheless the change from night to day was as true, as plain, as undeniable, as if the Sun of truth had risen up from the horizon in the bright light of tropical cloudless glory. Hence it is not necessary to define accurately when the Reformation took place: the blind man who was healed by Christ was puzzled when he was asked *how* his eyes had been opened, but he was able to say with perfect consciousness of truth, "One thing I *know*, that whereas I *was* blind, *now* I see¹." That which is important is, that we should recognise the great need which existed for reformation, and should believe that the work was carried out in accordance with the will of God. Now that reformation was needed it really seems absurd to doubt: certainly there was little doubt about the matter when the Reformation was impending: almost all parties joined in desiring it: councils were held for the purpose of procuring it: the abuses which horrified the hearts of good men, and seemed to threaten the

¹ St John ix. 25.

very existence of Christianity, were too gross to be defended: and the Council of Trent bears its testimony to the abundance of the need by the number of its canons "*de Reformatione.*" God was in fact speaking to the Churches in very solemn tones in the beginning of the sixteenth century: the middle ages with their peculiar institutions and tone of thought were passing away: even the invention of printing was sufficient to proclaim a new era: and it seemed (humanly speaking) to be a question whether the Churches should be reformed, or whether the candlesticks of Western Christendom should be utterly taken away. Those persons who decry the Reformation ought not to omit this view of the case: they ought not to assume that the Roman Church would have been even such as she is now, if the Reformation had not taken place: and with regard to Romanism in our own country, it should be borne in mind that Romanism existing alongside of a reformed Church, and protected by a Protestant sovereign, is demonstrably a very different thing in its temper and

its claims from the same religion existing in a country dominant and supreme. Of course it is impossible to say what might have happened, if the Church of England had not reformed herself: but it seems not unreasonable to believe that the whole of Christendom has an interest in her reform: it seems difficult to suppose that great results have not arisen, and will not yet arise, from an honest and God-fearing effort to hold the truth and nothing but the truth, to return to primitive purity, and to exhibit a Church apostolical in pedigree, orthodox in doctrine, and making her appeal to the Word of God.

There is, I suppose, no problem more difficult than that of reforming a Church. There is so much danger of rude handling, so much danger of mixing up spiritual and temporal questions, and of enlisting in the alleged cause of reform those who really mean pillage: and there is need of so much wisdom to know how far to go, what to take away as essentially bad, what to leave as being harmless, how much to yield to old association, and when to cut up by

the roots. Moreover, it is so difficult to bring precisely the right authority to bear, to ensure sufficient motive power and yet to avoid Erastian interference with spiritual prerogatives. And besides, there is terrible danger of pulling down without being able to build up, and of sweeping the house of the evil spirit of superstition only to make way for the seven more evil spirits of infidelity and atheism. All this may be concluded theoretically, and is confirmed practically: greatly as we know that reformation was required in the sixteenth century, yet we cannot deny that much of the work was ill done, and that in many parts of Europe the Reformation has not been the unmixed blessing, which it might have been hoped that it would be: and firmly as we may believe in the need of reformation for those two countries, Italy and Spain, which are now (as it were) going through the pangs of a new birth, yet how impossible is it to look without anxiety to their future, and not to fear lest a Reformation should arise, which may be no true Reformation after all! Now

it is with a full sense of this essential difficulty that we ought to look upon the history of our own Church. The question is not whether everything that has been done has been well done, not a question of perfection, not a question of how things should be done if they could be done over again, but rather whether upon the whole we have not cause to bless God for His providential care, and whether we ought not to be stirred up by recollection of the past to be hopeful for the future, to perfect what remains, and to endeavour to make the Church of England more completely than she ever has been a blessing to the country and a praise in the earth.

It is impossible, and it is also unnecessary, to speak of all the things, which the Church of England, listening to God's message in the sixteenth century, did in the way of reformation: but I wish to remind you of two or three great principles, which she then accepted as the basis of her reform.

1. She returned to primitive practice by sweeping away that worship of saints, and

especially of the Blessed Mother of our Lord, which had assumed such terrific proportions in the middle ages : and she guarded against the recurrence of this and similar evils by the principle, that nothing should be required to be believed, which was not to be found in Holy Scripture, or to be proved thereby. I apprehend that in the middle ages this false worship had become to a great extent *the* worship of the people : the evil still exists in the Roman Church : and what is worse, the Edict of the Immaculate Conception has tended to fix error concerning the Blessed Virgin in the highest regions of dogmatic Theology. The principle of an appeal to Scripture is the true preservative against such error : it would seem to be almost axiomatic, that the Church (notwithstanding the claims which have recently been made for her) has no power to evolve out of her own consciousness doctrines which are not to be found there : and certainly the attempt to find in Scripture the Roman doctrine concerning the Blessed Virgin, though it has recently been made by a very subtle divine, is as

hopeless as the most hopeless of problems which ingenious men have ever attempted to solve¹.

2. Again, the Church of England at her Reformation not only appealed to Holy Scripture as authority upon points of doctrine, but she boldly published the Scriptures, put them into the hands of the people clothed in their own language, risked all the dangers of presumption and ignorance, and consented to stand or fall according as she was or was not conformable to the picture drawn in the Book of God. This was a great and irrevocable step, and like many great steps it was very simple: it would seem that there could not be two opinions concerning the propriety of giving every possible facility to Christians of knowing what their Lord said and did, and what was done and written by His apostles: why *not* do so? why exhibit the relics of Apostles, interesting and curious no doubt if they be genuine, and *not* exhibit the most precious and undoubtedly genuine relics of all, the relics of mind and spirit, the imperishable

¹ See Appendix, Note D.

words, which, unlike any other ancient remains, are endued with an undying life, and are as fresh and bright now as when first indited by inspiration of God? Why not do this? There is one reason, which I will give in no rancorous spirit, but with a deep sense of sorrow: that reason is, that it would be absolutely impossible to sustain much to which the Church of Rome has committed herself in the face of an open Bible. I do not say that an argument might not be set up for the system of teaching which that Church adopts; I do not say that it is not impossible for men to persuade themselves, that that system is the embodiment of Catholic truth; but I am convinced that, taking a broad view, it would not be possible to maintain it in the midst of a nation of plain honest serious thinking people, who were taught and encouraged daily to search the Scriptures and ask whether those things were so.

3. Once more. The Church of England at her Reformation simplified and purified her ancient offices, and caused divine service to

be celebrated in a tongue which the people could understand. It is really wonderful to notice the skill and discretion with which this was done: the beauty of the English in which the Reformers exhibited the ancient Latin offices seems like an inspiration: nothing of the kind has ever come near it, the rhythm so perfect, the language so terse, the spirit of the original so wonderfully preserved: the new and the old moreover so cunningly amalgamated, so fitted and matched, that often you cannot tell which is old and which new¹. This however is a subject by itself, and cannot be enlarged upon now: I mention it as an instance, and a very principal instance, of the manner in which the Church of England reformed herself: the sum and substance of the Reformation are in fact to be found in the Book of Common Prayer: there, more than in any other book, you may see expounded in the most practical manner the principles by which the Church of England is prepared to stand or fall.

¹ See Appendix, Note E.

I have thus brought before your minds, Christian Brethren, in a very cursory and of course imperfect way, a few representative instances of what the Reformation has done for us in England. It has swept away abuses by an appeal to Scripture and primitive antiquity: it has opened the Word of God to the people: it has given us a Service-book, conformable to the old traditions of the Church, clothed in the fairest dress that our language can supply. These are some of the fruits,—it would be easy to mention others,—which remain as a perennial blessing to our Church and country, now that the heats and passions and troubles and conflicts connected with the great spiritual revolution have long passed away. I proceed to remark, that, in looking back upon the Reformation, or rather perhaps in looking at the condition of things in which we find ourselves as inheritors of a Reformed Church, there are two quite opposite faults which we may commit.

On the one hand we may be so entranced by the contemplation of its excellence, so engrossed by the persuasion that the Reformation

was God's doing, so overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude to that providential care which brought us through our troubles, that we may be tempted to overlook defects, or even to put ourselves into such a mental position as to be unable to believe that any defects can possibly exist. Of course as a mere matter of speculative opinion it does not much signify what view we take: it would be like an opinion upon the architecture of a particular period, or the merits of some school of painting, or the like: but we cannot confine opinions concerning the Reformation to this speculative region: the subject is too intensely practical: you cannot entirely separate opinions concerning the Reformation from opinions concerning the working of the Reformed Church. Any one, who dislikes the Reformation, for instance, may not unreasonably say, "The tree is known by its fruits: if the working of the Church of England since the Reformation has been all that can be desired, then you may maintain that the Reformation was all that could be desired, but not otherwise." I do not say that this view may

not be pressed unduly; but certainly there is enough in it to make us ask ourselves as honest men whether the fruits of the Reformation, such as we see them in the working of our Church, are altogether such as to satisfy our minds. Can we then be satisfied with the position which our Church holds? has she possession of the heart of the nation as we should desire? has she secured the affections and the prayers of the poor? are her services attended as we should wish them to be? and is there nothing in her past history and in her present condition, which her most loyal and devoted children would gladly, if they might, wash away with their tears? Now I do not wish to exaggerate our faults, and of course it must not be assumed that every defect in the working of a reformed Church is the consequence of that Church's reformed condition: but I do wish to say that if evils exist in the Church of England, mere indiscriminating unmitigated eulogy of the Reformation will not cure them: it may tend the other way: it may tend to produce a lazy self-satisfied feeling of contentment, which

will stop wholesome effort and interfere with practical work. What is the use of talking of Apostolical discipline, if our discipline be practically ineffectual? or of Evangelical truth and purity, if as a matter of fact we do *not* preach the Gospel to the poor? or of the glorious and blessed Reformation, if we are not doing the work which Christ has given us to do¹?

But then, on the other hand, we may commit quite as great a fault by disparaging the Reformation. In the mouths of some the Reformation was a simple *catastrophe*, and the sooner all marks of the mischief worked by the catastrophe can be cleared away, so much the better: it was a sinful rebellion against lawful authority: a wilful and shameful breach of the unity of the Church. It is impossible for me to do much more, on an occasion like this, than express my genuine astonishment that such language should have been used by members of our Church. That the history of the Reformation should be severely criticised is not merely just, not merely inevitable, but it is wholesome

¹ See Appendix, Note F.

and profitable: that many portions should be censured, and should be viewed differently by different minds might have been expected: that many of the actors, especially at critical and trying periods, should have exhibited the weaknesses of men, or even have been guilty of conspicuous faults, is by no means wonderful: but that any English Churchman should doubt whether upon the whole the Church was better or worse for being reformed, or should regard the Reformation not as a necessity but as a crime,—this I confess is to my mind absolutely wonderful. For my part I am old fashioned enough to believe that Bishop Latimer hit the truth, when he said to Bishop Ridley as they walked towards the martyrs' fire, that they were lighting that day a candle in England, which by God's grace should never be put out.

It seems to me that the way of truth lies between these two extremes,—between indiscriminating praise and unmitigated blame. Why should there not be such a middle course? it implies no spirit of vacillation or trimming to seek for it: you may admit a

principle and hold it to be vital, and yet you may object to certain consequences supposed to flow from it, or you may argue that they are not real logical consequences. And observe that there is all the difference in the world between finding fault for finding fault's sake, and endeavouring to investigate the nature of faults and confessing their existence and trying to mend them. In fact this spirit of fault-finding is not that which we want: what we need is a calm enlightened view of past history, a candid examination of our present condition, a humble readiness to hear the words which God's Spirit speaks, and a thorough determination in our own age and generation to do the work of Christ.

For indeed the Spirit speaks to the Church of England in this nineteenth century loudly and clearly enough. Great responsibility is laid upon her, and she has grand opportunities of doing good. It is not presumptuous to say that the whole body of Christendom is interested in the manner in which she performs her functions, and in the picture which she

exhibits of a pure and reformed branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church : but especially our own people are interested in seeing what their spiritual mother can do, and how she can rise to the situation in which God's providence places her and grapple with the difficulties of the time. Of course I cannot enter upon a discussion of all the Church's duties and privileges, but I think it may be well to direct attention to two or three departments of Christian work, toward which the Church of England seems to me to have at this time an especial call.

1. In the first place, our Church occupies a very important position with respect to dogma or the doctrinal side of religion. Is it too much to say that on this subject the Spirit is speaking to her, and assigning to her an important mission in this busy nineteenth century? We hear and read continually of the conflict between Christian dogma and the progressive results of modern thought : undoubtedly there is such a conflict ; at least there is a conflict between conclusions to which

it is supposed that Christian dogma leads and conclusions which it is supposed that human investigation has established. Many, as we know to our sorrow, have suffered loss in this conflict: some have fancied that the results of modern investigation are inconsistent with the doctrines of Christianity, and feeling that they could not give up those results without abdicating their station as intelligent conscientious responsible men, they have cast away their faith in Christ,—cast it away in some instances, as I verily believe, with intense sorrow, under a feeling of strong necessity: others have avoided a terrible bereavement, which they felt they could not bear, by submitting their whole spiritual being to an infallible guide, let the logical intellect say what it will. In fact we have seen the conflict of which I speak issuing in some cases in Rationalism, in others in Romanism. Either result is very terrible; but the point upon which I desire to lay stress is this, that the Church of England is called and enabled in a special manner, if she be

only true to her own principles, to guard against both these calamities, and to do more than any other Church can do towards the reconciliation of the claims of Faith and Reason, of Dogma and the Results of human thought, and towards the guidance of those who desire to recognise both of those lights which God has given to lighten the world. I will give my reasons for saying this. From the time of the Reformation onwards the Church of England has united in a remarkable manner human reason and divine truth: she has appealed to men's judgment: it was by the new learning, as it was called, by going to original sources, by examining the grounds upon which doctrines were based and practices defended, that the spiritual victories of the Reformation were chiefly gained; those who were most deeply convinced of the need of Reformation not only were not afraid to say "Search the Scriptures," but they were bold enough also to echo the words of St Paul, "We speak as unto wise men: judge ye what we say¹."

¹ 1 Cor. x. 15.

But on the other hand there was an absence of the rationalistic spirit: there was an absolute submission to divine revelation: the work which the Church of England had to do was to distinguish between divine revelation and human inventions: she did not sit in judgment upon revealed truth or undertake to sanction truth which was not revealed: what she said was this, Let me be sure that it is God who speaks, and then I am prepared to obey. It seems to me that although there may have been faults in working out the principle, still the principle of uniting faith and reason, and dealing with them as twin foundations, has been essential in the Anglican scheme. Nor can this well be otherwise so long as that practice of combined education in Universities, to which I referred last Sunday, continues as the normal system of the country. Some persons, I know, are beginning to fear lest the religious status of Oxford and Cambridge should become so deteriorated as to compel candidates for the Ministry to seek their education elsewhere: I trust that this may never come

to pass: but, anyhow as long as the practice continues to be what it is, the Church of England illustrates by the education of her Priesthood the principle of which I am speaking. Here, in our English Universities, we have, as you know, lawyers and clergymen and physicians and men of science educated side by side: their minds cast in the same mould: their habits of thought constructed upon the same principles: their powers tested in the same field. I have no words to express my sense of the advantages of this system: it may be open to some objections: dogmatic teaching may sometimes be kept too much in the background: theology may sometimes lose its fair share of attention: the system, like many other things which in themselves are good, may not be without its perils: still we have in it the grandest opportunity that the world presents for making Revelation and Reason meet together, Faith and Science kiss each other: there is no kind of education so likely, by God's grace, to steer a man safely between the Scylla of superstition and the Charybdis of infidelity.

And so I trust that Oxford and Cambridge may long be instruments for helping on the work of the Church of England in this part of her mission. Anyhow I cannot but deem the work a most important one, and one to which she is especially called. Touching as she does the two sides of the controversy she has unequalled advantages for producing harmony, and for constructing a road, upon which men may walk securely, who do not wish to be indifferent to the results of human investigation and do not wish to be deaf to the voice of Christ. I need not tell any who know the pinch of the question how important and blessed a work this is ; but I would venture to urge on behalf of the thousands of intelligent and half-educated people, who know enough to go wrong and whom so many influences tend to mislead, that it is the duty of those who are looking forward to the Ministry to prepare themselves for dealing with religious difficulties, so that being converted themselves they may know how to strengthen their brethren.

2. Secondly, the Spirit seems to me to be

saying to the Church of England that she must make greater efforts than hitherto to preach the Gospel to the poor, to become the poor man's Church. A good deal has been done in this direction: we have got rid of much pride and exclusiveness and sham respectability: we have made our Churches in general to look not only more like houses of God, more worthy of His Majesty, if anything can be said to be worthy, but also more like places in which it is intended that men should worship God with one heart and one voice. There is too, I believe, a much more earnest feeling on the part both of laity and clergy with regard to Church duties and Church services: when I look back to the condition of things which I remember in my boyhood, the change for the better appears absolutely wonderful. Nevertheless we have still much to do: we have still lost ground to make up: the working of the Church is not yet what it ought to be. I do not think that we are likely for years to come to suffer from want of zeal: may I be permitted however to remind you how important it is, that we should

have not only zeal but wisdom? Especially we should remember that there is scope for all the energies of an English Priest within the principles and rules of the reformed Church: there is no occasion to hanker after ceremonial which our Church has rejected: she has retained enough for comeliness or even for splendour: slovenly services are not the genuine fruit of the Reformation: the demand which we find almost everywhere for a service hearty, spirited, stirring, congregational, may be abundantly met upon the principles of the Book of Common Prayer.

3. Lastly, the Spirit seems to me to be warning the Church of England to call upon all that is good and wise within her to take counsel for her safety and well being. Hitherto we have rested too much upon our State position: we have fancied, or have seemed to fancy, that the Law would do everything for us, and that our strength was to sit still. This will not do: it was mischievous in past days: it would be fatal now. What we need is union of feeling, union of counsel, union of action: we need that

the hearts and minds of clergy and laity should be brought together to consult solemnly and wisely, and to determine to do vigorously and unselfishly that which shall be for the honour of Christ and for the welfare of His people. Humanly speaking I think it is impossible to overestimate the power of work which the Church of England possesses,—the power of evangelizing our own country, the power of influencing the world,—if only her strength were directed with wisdom of counsel and with unity of purpose. And oh ! if all those who love her would combine in hearty prayers to God for the influence of His Spirit upon her, what might we not hope for England ? what might we not hope for mankind ?

IV.

*DISSENSIONS CONCERNING THE HOLY
COMMUNION.*

ST LUKE XXIII. 19, 20.

And He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after Supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you.

I HAVE sometimes thought that it would be an improvement in our University regulations, if, as at Oxford, the Holy Communion were occasionally administered in this church as a University ordinance. The practice would tend to exhibit the University in the high character of a Christian family, and to bind together by the closest bonds the various collegiate bodies of which it is composed. It might

be advantageous also that we should be able, as members of the University, to connect the thought of St Mary's Church with a higher religious service than that of hearing sermons : and surely there is no way in which the University, as a seminary of religious education, could more fittingly invoke the necessary aid of the Holy Spirit of God.

I do not know whether it is a consequence of the omission of Holy Communion as a University ordinance, or not, but certainly I believe it to be a fact, that sermons on the Holy Communion have been very rare in this church. For my own part I do not remember, as a resident member of the University, to have ever heard a sermon upon the subject. Possibly some may have been preached, but they must have been rare. Perhaps it has been felt that to deal with the subject as one of controversy would be unprofitable, and that a practical treatment might advantageously be left to preachers in the College chapels. Anyhow the fact of the rarity of sermons bearing upon the doctrine and practice of the Holy

Communion does not appear to me to admit of a doubt.

This being so, I ought perhaps to apologize for choosing a text tending to throw me at once upon a subject, which has been so generally avoided, and which is so likely to present controversial difficulties. I am sensible of the delicacy of the task which I undertake, and of the improbability of my being able successfully to treat the subject in the manner which I intend and desire: nevertheless there are circumstances, which at the present time render it expedient that something should be said touching the great Christian Sacrament from this pulpit: so at least I believe: and, thus believing, it would be cowardly to shrink from the subject, in consideration of its admitted difficulties, and of the great danger which manifestly exists of giving offence or pain to one person or another, in a matter concerning which there is so much diversity of view and such intensity of religious feeling.

May the Holy Spirit of God assist and guide me!

Now, although there is, as I have said, and as every one knows, great diversity of view concerning the Holy Communion, yet there are certain leading points concerning which there is no diversity. It is well that these points of agreement should be kept well in mind. Let me mention a few of them.

In the first place, beyond all doubt, Jesus Christ our Lord instituted the Holy Communion Himself. We have four accounts of the institution: one by each of the first three Evangelists, and one by St Paul. These four accounts substantially agree: I say substantially, because there are small variations, of which different minds may take different views, but which no man can regard as being of very great importance: the main facts of the case, the occasion of the institution, the time of it, the manner of it, the nature of the command by which it was accompanied, are as clear and as certain as anything possibly can be. It is further certain that our Lord intended the service which He instituted to be permanent in His Church: He did not

tell the disciples at the time how often they should celebrate His Sacrament, though it is possible that He may have done so in those mysterious forty days, when He spoke to them “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God¹:” neither does he appear to have enjoined the minor circumstances of the ritual, leaving these probably to the discretion of His Church: but that the Sacrament which was instituted on the eve of the Passion was intended to be as permanent as the Church itself, against which the Lord promised that the gates of hell should not prevail—*this* is beyond a doubt. Nor was it merely *a* service appointed by our Lord: it was emphatically *the* service appointed by Him: prayer was an ancient institution, singing of hymns was familiar to every Jew, the reading of the Scriptures took place in the synagogue every Sabbath-day, and sermons or exhortations were as common in olden times as they are now: consequently there was no need that Christ should appoint any of these as ordinances of His Church:

¹ Acts i. 3.

the one entirely new thing which he *did* institute, and which must be therefore regarded as the most characteristic, the most emphatically *Christian*, of the services in which His people were to join, was the solemn commemoration of His own death in the Sacrament which He Himself ordained.

Concerning all this there can be no doubt.

But further, there can be no doubt concerning the manner in which our Lord's immediate followers obeyed the command, and in which the Church continued to obey it. I do not mean to say that we know all the minute forms of primitive worship: but with regard to the main fact, that the primitive Christians regarded the Holy Communion as the great Christian service in which they were bound, and privileged to join, concerning *this* there can be no doubt. We see the sacred rite peeping out in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles: we find it recognised and made the subject of discussion by St Paul: and we know very well that Justin Martyr, when describing in his Apology the life and habits of

Christians gives a minute and beautifully simple account of the celebration of the Eucharist, and represents it as the regular Sunday worship of the then persecuted Church. From that time to this the same holy Feast has been kept : and though corruptions may have crept in, and the ordinance may not have been always administered in its completeness or its purity, and superstition may have been connected with it, and it may have been sometimes made an occasion of strife and debate rather than a feast of love, still it may be said with truth that never was a command so universally obeyed as that which Christ gave to His disciples when he said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

There is one other point to which I will direct your attention as not admitting of a doubt, namely this, that it is the duty of Christians to partake of the Holy Communion and that to worthy communicants it is the channel of great spiritual blessing. Upon this point I should conceive that there was absolutely no difference of opinion, either between

ourselves and the Church of Rome, or between ourselves and Protestant nonconformists,—in fact, with the small exception of those who eschew sacraments altogether, I should suppose that there was absolute unanimity amongst all Christians. There are of course differences of opinion, or perhaps rather of feeling, with regard to details: the degree of frequency with which it is desirable to go to the Lord's Table, the preparation necessary for going, the comparative value of this channel of divine grace and of others,—these points and the like may and will give rise to differences of opinion and of practice: but with regard to the main point I conceive the unanimity to be absolute: no one will venture to deny the binding character of his Lord's command, or the certainty of a blessing following upon humble obedience; and though there will always be a large body of professing Christians who do not obey, they will justify their disobedience, if at all, upon quite other grounds than that of the doubtfulness of the duty which the command of Christ imposed.

Here then are three points, upon which I say that there is no real difference of opinion. For the sake of distinctness let me just recapitulate them.

1. The Holy Communion was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and is the only religious service so instituted.

2. The Holy Communion was celebrated from the first as the great Christian feast, and continues to be so.

3. It is the duty of all Christians to join in Holy Communion: and to worthy communicants it is the channel of great grace and blessing.

Now with these three points conceded one might have hoped that Christians would have been content to obey their Lord's command, to enjoy the blessing of obedience, and to leave untouched those difficult questions, which upon every mysterious subject it is so easy to ask and so difficult to answer. Such however has not been the case, and perhaps we ought not to be surprised. There would of course be a tendency in devout minds to indulge in deep

and reverent and affectionate contemplation of so solemn a mystery: strong language would be used, expressive of entire faith in the fulfilment of Christ's promise and the reality of His presence: and phrases would perhaps be adopted at a time when no controversy existed, which might afterwards be strained in the cause of controversy to a meaning beyond that which they were intended to bear. No harm was likely to come from language however strong, so long as no attempt was made to dogmatise beyond the warrant of Scripture, and to tie up the passionate feelings of devout worshippers in the hard bands of formal definitions. However the days of controversy unhappily came at length; and in the twelfth century, and apparently not till then, the controversy was gathered up and compacted into the single word, which has been found so difficult to understand and so fruitful of bitter results, namely, Transubstantiation. Finally this dogma of Transubstantiation was made an article of faith by the Lateran Council held A. D. 1215: and it was decreed that

Christians should firmly believe and simply acknowledge, "that, in the Sacrament of the Altar, the Body and Blood of Christ are truly contained under the accidents of Bread and Wine, which are transubstantiated, the Bread into the body, and the Wine into the Blood¹."

Upon this dogma of the presence of the Lord's Body and Blood in the consecrated elements by Transubstantiation I wish to make a few remarks, which shall be as simple as the difficulty of the subject permits, and to which I crave your attention.

In the first place it is to be observed that the real controversy between the Church of England and those who maintain this dogma is not with regard to the presence of Christ, but with regard to the manner of that presence. You will find this frequently and strongly insisted upon in one of the most learned English works upon the subject, Bishop Cosin's *History of Transubstantiation*. I do not of course mean that there may not be erroneous views

¹ See Appendix, Note G.

concerning the manner of the presence, but I mean that they who object to the dogma of Transubstantiation and who say that the Church of Rome had no right to impose such a dogma, do not by that objection express anything incompatible with the strongest opinions concerning our Lord's spiritual presence: what they do say is, that it is wrong to attempt to define that presence by any human formula, and that especially, with regard to the particular formula in question, experience has shown that it is capable of being interpreted in a most mischievous sense, and that it leads almost necessarily and has in fact led to the most terrible superstition.

For just observe what the dogma depends upon. It depends upon the distinction between *substance* and *accidents*. And is this a real distinction? is it a distinction so clear and intelligible that it may be used for explaining language adopted by the Lord Himself? I believe that the more we reflect upon the distinction the more unsatisfactory we shall find it to be, and that for all scientific and

theological purposes it ought to be absolutely exploded. Unfortunately it was just the kind of distinction in which the schoolmen delighted, and out of which they could spin their endless and amusing subtleties. And so you may find, if you choose to look, a series of curious questions on the subject in the great work of St Thomas Aquinas, culminating in this: "Can the accidents of a thing exist without any substance?" to which the answer is given, that by the power of God even this may be¹. The notion is, you will observe, that anything cognisable by the senses has certain *accidents*, as colour, hardness, elasticity, or what not, and that these accidents belong to and rest upon something which the senses do not realize, and that this something is the *substance*. The substance is therefore something with which the senses have nothing to do: it can be brought to no physical test: it is in fact merely an hypothesis: and the distinction of *substance* and *accidents*, when it comes to be examined, turns out to be merely a mode

¹ See Appendix, Note H.

of conception, having apparently no existence outside the human mind.

This technical use of the word *substance* must be carefully remembered in this controversy. We commonly use the word in a very different signification: we make *substance* to mean very much the same as *matter*: we speak of flint as a hard *substance*, of glass as a transparent *substance*, and so on. And though it is unfortunate that a word should be used in ways so different, and though it is quite inevitable that confusion and trouble should arise from the double use, still it is unfair to deal with language as of necessity involving gross conclusions which those who use the language do not intend it to imply. It seems to me that the argument for Transubstantiation has never been put more neatly and clearly than it was by Gardiner in his controversy with Cranmer: "In everything," he argues, "all is substance and accidents: but the *accidents* be not changed: and yet change there is: it must needs be then that the *substance* is changed." Granting the premisses the argument is a very good one, and

Cranmer seems to me not to have dealt with it satisfactorily¹. But the error lies in the assumption that everything does consist of substance and accidents—in the assumption at least as here put : for if it is merely meant that all which can be perceived by the senses is comprehended under the head of *accidents*, and all else is comprehended under the head of *substance*, then it is clear that the result of the argument is merely this, that the change in the consecrated elements, whatever it may be, is of a kind not cognisable by the senses : and this no doubt is true, but it is not equivalent to the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

But in granting that the technical use of the term *substance* ought to be remembered in this controversy, and that the Roman doctrine ought not to be connected with results depending upon a different and familiar use of the term, which the upholders of that doctrine would eschew, I think we have a right to ask whether a use of language can be safe and wise, which has constantly misled both laity

¹ See Appendix, Note I.

and divines, nay which seems to have misled even such a divine as Waterland¹? For the misfortune is that the moment you take the doctrine of Transubstantiation and deal with it as a doctrine applicable to the life of Christian souls, that moment you are in imminent danger of introducing gross views of the Eucharist: let it remain wrapped up in the artificial and technical distinctions of the Schools, and it may perhaps not be of supreme moment that the doctrine should be refuted and eschewed: but make it a practical doctrine, introduce it into parochial teaching, make it part of the Church's ordinary ministrations, and forthwith you are led almost of necessity into that kind of superstition, which in past ages degraded and deformed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

But we may be told, and we are told, that there is nothing gross in the doctrine itself, and that the doctrine as laid down by the Council of Trent is very beautiful and very elevating. Let me, at the risk of being wear-

¹ See Appendix, Note K.

some, call your attention to the Tridentine definition. It is declared "that by the consecration of the bread and wine a conversion takes place of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood:" and not only so, but that Christ is wholly contained in every particle of each of the consecrated elements¹. Now it seems to me that we have in these Tridentine definitions an exhibition of that which is in truth the origin and spring of all the trouble and confusion which have arisen in this matter. We are told that Christ is wholly contained in every particle of consecrated bread and consecrated wine. What is the ground for asserting this? Our Lord said of the bread which He consecrated, "This is My Body," and of the wine He said, "This is My Blood," and He said no more. He never told us that He was wholly contained in one of the elements or in any particle of it, and it is absolutely impossible for us to know more than He was Him-

¹ See Appendix, Note L.

self pleased to reveal: and as soon as any teacher or any Council undertakes to predicate anything more than Scripture contains, we get into a region, at best of uncertainty, probably of dangerous errors.

I think therefore that the Church of England has done wisely in repudiating the doctrine of Transubstantiation. "Transubstantiation," says our 28th Article, "(or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ: but it is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions." Of course it may be argued, and it has been argued, that the doctrine here repudiated is not that to which the Church of Rome is pledged:—but two things are quite certain, and these two things seem to justify the Article. First, the doctrine cannot be proved by Holy Writ, and this is the principal charge against it. You may argue as much as you please about substance and accidents, but there is nothing about them in Scripture,

and no logic can carry you beyond divine revelation. Secondly, the doctrine has given occasion to many superstitions; this also is certainly true: it is, as I believe, the inevitable result: and this is sufficient to make us look with suspicion upon a doctrine, and to reject it as soon as it becomes clear that it is not revealed. The origin of the doctrine was bad, namely, human speculation: the results were bad, namely, abundant superstitions; and on both grounds the Reformed Church of England did well in rejecting the doctrine and in returning to simpler and more Scriptural views.

When I speak of simpler views, I am of course aware that in so mysterious a subject no views can be simple in the sense of being free from mystery: any views, which should in this sense be admitted to be simple, would by the very admission be condemned as false. The simplicity which I have in my mind is rather that which is content to leave mystery as mystery, and not attempt to submit it to the formulæ of human thought: just as the Apostles' Creed is simple, and yet full of mys-

teries so profound, so utterly beyond human comprehension, that we can merely enunciate them and say "I believe." Hence the controversies on the subject of the Holy Eucharist, which of late years have been so abundant within the Church of England have seemed to me not very profitable, not very likely to lead to useful results. We see it, and hear it, for instance, continually and very warmly discussed, whether the presence of Christ in the Sacrament be an *objective* or a *subjective* presence: it is taken for granted that it must be either the one or the other: it must either be *objective*, that is, independent of the mind contemplating it: or else it must be *subjective*, that is, dependent upon the contemplating mind¹. Now it may seem at first sight that this view of the question is exhaustive; and yet whichever horn of the dilemma you take, you arrive at consequences not easily admissible. Is it conceivable that the presence of Christ should be altogether independent of the worshipper? If so, do you not degrade that

¹ See Appendix, Note M.

presence, and run the risk of confounding the sacrament with a charm, something that can produce results without the accompanying energy of a true and lively faith on the part of those who receive it? On the other hand, is it conceivable that the presence of Christ should be altogether *dependent* upon the spirit of the worshipper, so that there should be no absolute and independent truth and meaning in the words of our Lord, when He said, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood"? I cannot accept either horn of the dilemma. And if it be asked, what then will you do? I reply by denying that any one has a right to submit the words of Christ to any dilemma of the kind: what right have we to say that His presence must be either objective or subjective? why may it not in some sense be both? or how do we know that that mysterious presence of which we speak is capable of being described under such a formula at all?

And then we hear of *high* and *low* doctrine concerning the blessed Sacrament: and it seems sometimes to be assumed that that

phase of doctrine which most gets rid of the idea of a sacrament, and most identifies the consecrated elements with the actual Body and Blood of Christ is truly *high*, and that that which is expressed by Transubstantiation is the highest of all: and, if I did not misunderstand what was reported to have been said the other day by a clergyman, it would seem that there are amongst us those who think that high doctrine cannot be effectively taught without the accompaniment of certain unusual ornaments and ceremonies¹. Now of course high and low are merely metaphorical terms; but I wish to say with all earnestness that not unfrequently I meet with doctrine which I find described as *high*, and which nevertheless to my mind is unspeakably and distressingly *low*; it seems to me not to exalt my Lord and Saviour, but to degrade Him; and when I find that the dogma of Transubstantiation leads devout persons to speak of God being upon the Altar when the consecrated wafer is there, I shudder at the thought

¹ See Appendix, Note N.

of what may be honestly done under the name of piety. *High* views of the Holy Communion! *High* views of that one only service which Christ instituted Himself! *High* views of that Sacrament, which is the most emphatic pledge of His presence, the most signal channel of grace, the divinely appointed means of shewing forth His death until His coming again!—who would not be ashamed to confess that he did not hold *high* views?

What then are high views? In one word those views are highest, which are most Scriptural and most practical. Scriptural of course they must be: all theology must be this: but I think there is no department of Theology in which experience has proved more distinctly and more sadly the extreme danger of losing Scripture for our guide and of trusting to the definitions and discussions and distinctions of the human intellect: and so I believe that at this present time, in the midst of controversy and the difficulties which controversy stirs up, our best and safest guide is the history of the Eucharist which the Gospels contain, and the

language which was spoken at the institution by Jesus Christ Himself. It is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, when leaving the heat of controversy you take your Bible in your hands and read such words as those of my text: "He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you." Or the change from controversy to Scripture may remind us of that night when the disciples were alone in the storm; they were "in the midst of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary;" but when Jesus Himself came into the vessel, *then* the wind ceased, and all was calm.

Of this I am sure, that such a reference to Scripture and to the words of Christ will tend more than anything else to make our views upon this, as upon every other subject, practical. I feel ashamed, Christian brethren, that the tone of this my concluding sermon should

have seemed, and I know that it must have seemed, to have been controversial rather than practical. Nothing but a strong belief in the importance of that view of the subject which I have ventured to put before you, would have induced me to travel into the region of controversy, and especially controversy upon a subject so difficult and so delicate as that of the Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood. I willingly bid farewell to controversy, and seize upon the few moments of precious time which remain to say two or three final words upon the practical side of the subject.

My brethren, as soon as we come to this practical side, all may easily be unity and peace amongst those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Those words of Hooker, which have so often been quoted, may bear quoting again, when he says: "Let it be sufficient for me presenting myself at the Lord's Table to know what I there receive from Him, without searching or inquiring of the manner how Christ performeth His promise; let disputes and questions, enemies to piety, abatements of

true devotion, and hitherto in this cause but over patiently heard, let them take their rest ; let curious and sharpwitted men beat their heads about what questions themselves will, the very letter of the word of Christ giveth plain security that these mysteries do as nails fasten us to His very Cross, that by them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force, and virtue, even the blood of His gored side, in the wounds of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are dyed red both within and without, our hunger is satisfied and our thirst for ever quenched ; they are things wonderful which he feeleth, great which he seeth, and unheard of which he uttereth, whose soul is possessed of this Paschal Lamb, and made joyful in the strength of this new wine ; this bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold, this cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving ; with touching it sanctifieth,

it enlighteneth with belief, it truly conformeth us unto the image of Jesus Christ. What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not; it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ; His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, His word He knoweth which way to accomplish; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, O my God, Thou art true! O my soul, thou art happy¹!”

These are golden words. Whatever difference there may be in theoretical opinions all good men agree in this, that Christ instituted His Sacrament as a chief means of grace, and that our duty and privilege is to go to His Table and to seek Him there. Who can exaggerate the blessings which the devout communicant may expect—the strengthening of faith, the kindling of love, grace to resist temptation, the entrance into the soul of that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and which can keep the heart and mind—who can say too much concerning these blessings?

¹ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book v. ch. 67, § 12.

and who will deny that they are to be had abundantly in the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood?

As wise men therefore, and specially as men many of whom have or will have the responsible task of guiding their brethren in the ways of God, I entreat you earnestly to let your minds chiefly rest upon this practical view of sacramental mysteries. It is the highest view, the most edifying, the most lasting. Controversy there must be; but it is not controversy, nor the subtle distinctions in which controversy delights, that will support the soul of man when the soul is in distress. When a young man finds himself in conflict with temptation, or when his mind is beset with doubt, and his spirit is in perplexity and trouble, what he chiefly wants is a practical view of the means of grace, the habit of seeking his Saviour in the ordinances of His Church, the confidence which habit alone can give, that in the faithful use of those ordinances he can surely and abundantly find the help that he needs. Or when a man is in sickness and

withdrawn by God's hand from society and the world, and he is brought face to face with his conscience, and is compelled to reflect upon his past life and to meditate concerning his future prospects, then it is not ingenious speculation but a practical view of religion, and that alone, which will serve his turn. And lastly, when the end of all things comes, and the graves give up their dead, and the voice of the Son of God is heard, and He Himself is verily and indeed present, not in sacramental symbols nor by such spiritual presence as is vouchsafed now, but in the glory of His Father and with all the holy angels, then many who are first will be last, and they who will be most prepared to meet their Lord, and most fit to enjoy His presence, will be they, who in this life most carefully studied His commands, and most earnestly endeavoured to do them!

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

THE article to which I refer appeared in the number of the Edinburgh Review for October 1853, and was afterwards published as a separate pamphlet. It is entitled "Church Parties," and purports to be a review of three works by the late Dean Goode, Dean Hook, and the late Archdeacon Hare respectively, whom the reviewer regarded at the time of writing "as representatives of the three great parties which divide the Church of England." These parties we are told "are commonly called the Low Church, the High Church, and the Broad Church parties; but such an enumeration," the Reviewer continues, "is the result of an incomplete analysis. On a closer inspection, it is seen that each of these is again triply subdivided into sections which exemplify respectively the exaggeration, the stagnation, and the normal development of the principles which they severally claim to represent. And these subdivisions, though popularly confounded with each other, differ amongst themselves, as much as the delirium of fever or the torpor of old age differs from the circulation of health."

The article is written in a very sprightly style, and was sure of being eagerly read at the time of its first appearance ; but I do not think that it would have left so permanent a mark behind, as in my belief it has, if it had not been for the ingenious classification of the clergy in the various divisions and subdivisions which it pleased the writer to devise, in the manner to which reference is made in my sermon. The question is in a variety of ways so full of curious interest, that I venture to transcribe the passage at length.

“To ascertain the relative strength of the different sections into which the Church of England is divided, is not an easy task. At first it might be thought that the proctors elected to represent the clergy in Convocation would furnish data for such a calculation. But these elections have become mere forms, and are seldom contested ; and even in the few contests which have occurred, a very small proportion of the electors has taken part. The income of the different religious societies would give an element for determining the resources of the parties by which they are respectively supported : but it is impossible to find any society supported by only a single party. We may, however, deduce from this source some information bearing on the question. The subscriptions to the Church Missionary Society amount to about £100,000 a year ; those to the Propagation Society to about £50,000. The former is supported by all shades of Low Church and Broad Church ; the

latter by all shades of High Church and Broad Church. Hence if we suppose the number of adherents of the parties to be proportional to the amount of their subscriptions, we arrive at the conclusion that the Low Church party is (including its lay and clerical members) more than twice as numerous as the High Church party. Again, the Curates' Aid Society, supported mainly by the High Church, collects rather under £13,000 per annum; the Pastoral-Aid Society, supported mainly by the Low Church, collects a little above £30,000. This leads to much the same inference as before.

"The circulation of the religious newspapers, on the other hand, seems to give a different result. The *Record*, which is the organ of one extreme party, and the *Guardian*, which is the organ of the other, have about an equal circulation. But here again it is impossible to eliminate the elements which prevent us from founding any accurate calculation on these data. Many take in these journals as good 'family newspapers,' without agreeing with their views. Moreover neither of the moderate parties is represented by any newspaper. And again, the whole 'average circulation' of both *Record* and *Guardian* together, does not amount to eight thousand, whereas the number of clergymen in England alone is above 18,000.

"The address to the Archbishop in favour of the Gorham judgment was signed by more than 3,200 clergymen, of the Broad and Low Church parties;

that against the judgment by nearly 1,800 High Churchmen, including laity and clergy. This latter was signed by every Tractarian clergyman in England, and we have thus a proof that their number cannot exceed a thousand, for at least 800 of the signatures must have belonged to laymen or Anglican clergy.

“As another mode of obtaining an approximation to the proportion of parties, we have gone through the Clergy List, marking the names of all the clergymen whose opinions we knew, to the number of about 500. The result of this examination has been, that supposing those unknown to us to be in the same proportions with those known, we should be led to classify the 18,000 clergy of the Church of England as follows:—

High Church	{ Anglican	3,500
	{ Tractarian	1,000
	{ ‘High and Dry’ ...	2,500
Low Church	{ Evangelical	3,300
	{ Recordite	2,500
	{ ‘Low and Slow’	700
Broad Church	{ Theoretical	1,000
	{ Antitheoretical ...	2,500

And about 1000 peasant clergy in the mountain districts, who must be classed apart.”*

I trust that I shall be pardoned for the quotation of this long extract, to which I would have

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. xcvi. p. 337.

willingly given only a reference, if I had believed that such references are generally used in practice by readers. My chief purpose in citing the passage is to protest against its perverse ingenuity, and to lament the mischief which arises from such attempts to make clearer and more permanent lines of division amongst those who profess to belong to the same body; but besides this, I think the passage may be interesting and instructive, with respect to the condition of parties in the Church of England, from the fact that it must of necessity strike the reader as being in almost all points already out of date. The principles of the argument of course, if they were ever good for anything, are good now; but with regard to most of the statements which it contains, although written not much more than fifteen years ago, it is already not very trustworthy; and I apprehend that calculations made at the present time, upon the same principles, but in accordance with existing facts and phenomena, would give very different results. To say truth, it is difficult to write anything concerning parties in the Church of England, that is not soon left behind by the movement, which for evil or for good has been going on during the last twenty years or more: to take one example from the above extract, I should conceive the present "extreme High Church party" would entirely eschew the notion of the *Guardian* being their organ, or having ever been so.

NOTE B.

On the subject of confession, the following two remarkable passages occur in the Memoir of Mr Keble, lately given to the church (and a very precious gift) by Sir John T. Coleridge.

“You will find,” writes Mr Keble, in 1843, “a good deal of my feelings in an article which has been reprinted from the ‘Christian Remembrancer,’ I mean especially when that speaks of the *practical failure* of the English Church, which I feel more and more deeply every day ; chiefly in that I find myself more and more oppressed with the consciousness of my own ignorance, and how blindly I go about the parish, not knowing what men are really doing ; and whenever I do make discoveries, they disclose a fearful state of things ; and even when there is some seriousness, of respect and confidence towards the priest as such there is none, or next to none. In short, our one great grievance is the neglect of confession. Until we begin to revive that, we shall not have the due severity in our religion ; and without a severe religion, I fear our Church will practically fail.”

And again, in 1844. “Another reason for my being a worse correspondent than usual is, that somehow or another the parish takes up more and more time. As one gets more acquainted with the people, more and more things occur which make me think a visit worth while. This is a reason for

which I ought to be very thankful, though it is sad to think how very little one knows of one's people. We go on working in the dark, and in the dark it will be until the rule of systematic confession is revived in our Church¹."

I do not know how far these passages expressed Mr Keble's sentiments in later life, but they are certainly worthy of most respectful consideration as having been penned by him, and as the result of his experience as a parish priest. Several remarks may be made. In the first place, I suppose that every parish priest must have felt something like what Mr Keble describes in respect of working more or less in the dark; but it may be questioned whether the working in the dark would not to a great extent exist even if confession were more systematic, and whether there be not a natural tendency to overestimate an agency which others can use and we cannot; whether the *omne ignotum pro magnifico* does not to a certain extent apply here. Then, again, it must not be forgotten that in speaking of systematic confession we are dealing with something which we once had, and which we have put away, as we believe, upon practical grounds of expediency and propriety. Is there any proof that upon the whole the course taken was unwise? Is there such practical evidence of declension in morals amongst those nations in which the confessional has been given up as to make us

¹ Memoir, pp. 290, 291.

believe that the change was a mistake? I think it would be difficult to make this appear. But lastly, and this is the point to which I desire specially to call attention, it seems to me that independently of all difference of ecclesiastical views amongst clergymen of the Church of England, something which is equivalent to all intents and purposes to confession does and must exist in the parochial ministrations of all earnest parish priests. In the English Church, the parish priest constantly visits his people, and, to use Mr Keble's language, "as one gets more acquainted with the people, more and more things occur, which make me think a visit worth while;" and in such visits the minister gets at the hearts and consciences of his people. He hears their difficulties; he gives them advice. And what is all this in real fact but a ministry of confession without the name?

The Abbé Dubois, in his very admirable book entitled *Pratique du Zèle Ecclésiastique*, has an article upon the office of confession, from which I will make an extract, in illustration of what I have now written:—"Mais que dire," writes M. Dubois, "du prêtre confesseur et de la nécessité de la science pour l'exercice de son divin ministère? Le prédicateur dit ce qu'il veut au peuple qui l'écoute, sans avoir à craindre les interruptions, les objections, les interrogations, les discussions, &c. . . . Mais le confesseur ignorant peut-il être un instant tranquille sur le tribunal où il siège? Qu'est il sur ce terrain brûlant ou se décident à toute heure les destinées éternelles

des pénitents qui l'environnent? C'est un maître qui donne à ceux qui l'approchent, non plus des leçons générales comme elles qu'il donne en chaire, et qui convenaient à tout le monde, mais des leçons spéciales appropriées aux besoins spirituels de chacun; des leçons variées à l'infini, puisqu'il n'y a pas deux consciences qui se ressemblent, et que toutes ont leur exigences propres que le confesseur doit satisfaire¹”

Now is not the distinction here drawn between the preacher and the confessor just that which is so often and so properly drawn between the clergyman in the pulpit and the clergyman in his parochial visitations? And though few English clergymen would like to adopt the language of M. Dubois concerning the “decision every hour of the eternal destinies of penitents,” still are they not virtually placed in the position of dealing with individual consciences, and giving spiritual advice to persons differing infinitely in their spiritual necessities, which is here described as peculiarly that of the confessor?

On the whole, bearing in mind the evils which undoubtedly do flow from abuse of confession, may it not be doubted whether the amount of liberty on the subject permitted by the Church of England is not as well adapted as can be to the practical promotion of piety? I may add that my own mind is influenced against confession as a part of ordinary Christian discipline, not more by

¹ p. 97.

the popular notions concerning it, than by the perusal of such a work as *Morinus de Pœnitentiâ*.

As I have quoted in this note from Sir J. T. Coleridge's Memoir of Mr Keble, I will add that this Memoir furnishes a striking example of the benefit arising from the University system of combined education, to which I have referred more than once in these sermons. Nothing can be more touching, and few things more instructive, than the brotherly connection for life between an English Judge and an English Priest, beginning with and depending upon their youthful relation as fellow-students at Oxford.

NOTE C.

The pamphlet to which I have referred is entitled, *Free Discussion of Religious Topics*, and deserves notice both on account of the bold manner in which it deals with a very difficult question, and on account of the source from which it emanates. I venture to commend it to the reader's careful attention, though not entirely subscribing to the conclusions at which the author has arrived.

It seems to me so clear as to be axiomatic, that perfectly free discussion should be permitted upon all topics, whether religious or otherwise, and that we ought not to fear the result, but to have entire faith in truth and believe that it will be victorious in the end; but I should feel disposed to differ

from the Bishop with regard to the licence which should be allowed to those who have pledged themselves to the views of a body, such as the Church, and who have subsequently changed their views, and cannot satisfy themselves that their new opinions are in accordance with what the Church believes to be true. The question is of course one of degree; because within the Church, as within every corporate body, there must be a latitude of opinion, and a man may change his views from time to time, as the result of reading or thinking, and yet may be very far from getting outside the circle of doctrine which is tenable by a Church-teacher. Yet there clearly *are* cases in which a change of opinion ought to lead a man to resign his position: for example, if a clergyman should become an atheist, it could hardly be argued that it was his duty to teach atheism until stopped by authority. For my own part I think that if a man believes his own views to be irreconcilable with the creed or formulæ of the Church of which he is a Minister, even though he may suppose (as of course he will) his own views true and those of the Church false, he is bound as an honest man to resign his post. But there is another case which ought to be carefully considered, namely, that of a man who holds views which he firmly believes to be tenable within the Church's circle of doctrine, and which nevertheless, other persons do not believe to be so tenable; in this case I should hold that a man was not bound by the opinion of those other persons.

There are views for instance concerning Infant Baptism, the Inspiration of Scripture, the doctrine of Election, the presence of our Lord in the Eucharist, and so forth, which certain persons hold as consistent with the doctrine of the Church, and certain others repudiate. In these cases it seems only right that men should hold their position, until it is determined by competent authority that the views in question are not tenable within the circle of the Church's doctrine.

As a general rule I should deprecate the reference to courts of law of the question of the compatibility with the Church's doctrine of views which are candidly maintained as being so by a man, whose fame for learning and piety is otherwise satisfactory. It seems to me that there are obvious reasons why such references are likely to fail, and the reflex influence of the failure may be deleterious to the cause of orthodoxy. But I cannot agree with Bishop Hinds in the view which he appears to me to take concerning the action of the State in matters concerning Church doctrine : he seems to me to speak of the State coming in to check free discussion, as though the Church had through its connection with the state some exceptional power in this direction. I apprehend, however, that the State, that is, the Court of Law, only does for the Church that which would be done by a similar process for any sect or any corporate body ; that is to say, the civil power compels the performance of a contract ; a man has a certain

status upon certain conditions, and all that the Court of Law can do is to say authoritatively whether these conditions have or have not been fulfilled.

All this goes to shew how much depends, as I have urged in my sermon, upon the discreet use of liberty. Let me add a few words upon the subject. I say that in criticism, in scientific discussion, and in every other branch of human investigation, liberty must be permitted to the clergy, and that it may be abused. For instance: in criticism, it is generally allowed that the passage concerning the "three witnesses," 1 John v. 7, is to be regarded as spurious, and that a person who believes it to be spurious need not be regarded as heterodox concerning the Holy Trinity. There are a few other passages in the received text of the New Testament, to which a similar remark may, with more or less certainty, be applied. Here then we have an admission of the principle of rejecting passages on sufficient evidence of spuriousness; we cannot refuse to admit the principle; and yet we may say that in a very true sense it is a dangerous principle, and one which may be used to shake all faith in the Scriptures. For the questions arise, how much evidence of spuriousness is required? who is the judge? and may any scholarly minister with propriety bring before his people any doubts, which his reading may have suggested, concerning the genuineness of any passage of Scripture? You cannot logically restrain him,

and yet it is clear that he may turn his liberty to most mischievous consequences.

So again with regard to science. It must be admitted that the voice of science shall be heard, that human investigations shall proceed unfettered and untormented by unworthy fears of results: and of course divines must accept, in like manner as their lay-brethren, scientific conclusions, and they cannot be required or wished to hold these conclusions as secrets, as something to be shut up in confinement as dangerous. But it is obvious that this necessary liberty may be infinitely abused by an indiscreet person, and that doubt and darkness may be thrown upon every spiritual truth upon the plea of doing justice to the certainty and light of physical knowledge.

Judicial decisions as to what clergymen may or may not teach, unsatisfactory in themselves, are useless in dealing with this question, which is one of wisdom and discretion, and must always remain so, let courts of law do what they may.

NOTE D.

I refer to Dr Newman's letter to Dr Pusey on his *Eirenicon* (Longmans, 1866). He says (page 57), "I shall take what perhaps you may think a very bold step,—I shall find the doctrine of our Lady's present exaltation in Scripture. I mean to find it in the Vision of the Woman and Child in

the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse." Dr Newman then discusses the vision with his usual cleverness: but I confess that the effect produced upon my own mind is the reverse of that which is intended; and for this plain reason, that it seems contrary to the whole principle of the divine teaching that a view of the Blessed Virgin, upon which if true so much depends, should be deduced from or found in one passage in the most mysterious portion of the sacred volume, and should be entirely absent from, if not contrary to, all the plainer and more distinctively didactic portions. In fact, Dr Newman appears to me to have condemned his investigation by the phrase "I mean to find it." If the doctrine were really the doctrine of Scripture it would scarcely require such an ingenious search.

NOTE E.

In illustration of what has been said concerning the Book of Common Prayer take one or two examples almost at random.

First, as an example of translation or adaptation from the old offices, the Collect for the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin.

SARUM MISSAL.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus majestatem tuam supplices exoramus ut sicut unigenitus Filius tuus hodiernâ die cum nostræ carnis substantiâ in Tem-

plō est præsēntatus ita nos facias purificatis tibi mentibus præsēntari. Per eundem Dominum.

ENGLISH PRAYER-BOOK.

Almighty and ever living God, we humbly beseech Thy Majesty, that, as Thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto Thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

It will be noticed that in the above instance the translation is almost exact. The next gives an example of translation with some slight enlargement and improvement. It is the Collect for the 18th Sunday after Trinity.

SARUM MISSAL.

Da, quæsumus, Domine, populo tuo diabolica vitare contagia et te solum Deum puro corde sectari. Per.

ENGLISH PRAYER-BOOK.

Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notice the ring and rhythm of these, and then say whether it has not been caught by some of the prayers composed especially for the English book. Take for example the Collect for St Matthias' Day.

O Almighty God, who into the place of the

traitor Judas didst choose Thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; grant that Thy Church, being always preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The whole subject may be studied without difficulty, and with much profit, in that very useful little book, *The Prayer-book interleaved*; and I would recommend the reader, if he has not already done this, to do it at once. As a specimen of what has been achieved in later times I will insert here, from a collection of occasional prayers in my possession, a form of prayer and thanksgiving issued by authority in 1759, and ordered to be used on Sunday, February 18, on occasion of "the ceasing of the Distemper, which lately raged amongst the Horned Cattle in this kingdom."

Almighty Father, by whose just correction our beasts have been consumed, and our land hath mourned for the wickedness of them that dwell therein: we acknowledge ourselves to have deserved, that thou shouldest send upon us, for our luxury and sensuality, for our unthankfulness and neglect of Thee, the sorest of Thy judgments; and curse the fruit of our ground, and the increase of our kine, till there should be no herd left in the stalls. But instead of dealing with us after our sins, Thou hast in wrath remembered mercy: not suffering our cattle to decrease in the degree that

we had reason to fear; but restraining the contagious disease, which human skill was unable to heal; and at length causing it to cease throughout our borders, in the course of Thy infinitely wise Providence, and through Thy blessing on the prudent means, which our gracious Sovereign by the advice of his faithful Counsellors used for that end. We praise Thy Name, O Lord, who upholdest our souls in life, and hast not delivered us as a prey to pestilence and famine. May Thy unmerited removal of this punishment complete in us that dutiful regard to Thee, which we confess with sorrow Thy infliction of it for so many years hath wrought very imperfectly. May we sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto us; but consider, that Thou art He, who givest us power to get wealth, and bestowest on us all things richly to enjoy. May we learn to honour Thee with our substance, by temperance and justice, by acts of piety and charity; and not to chuse our portion in this life, but set our affections on the joys of that place, where they that love Thee shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house, and drink of the river of Thy pleasures, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all glory, thanksgiving and obedience, now and for ever. Amen.

Is it not strange that this composition should have been the work of a person or persons having before them as a model the Book of Common

Prayer? and is it not strange that compositions almost as faulty should have been issued down to our own time? The contrast may at all events make us thankful for what was done in the sixteenth century, when English was first adopted as the language of public prayer.

NOTE F.

The feeling which may be produced by an indiscriminating eulogy of the Reformation and its results upon some minds is expressed by Mr Ward in his *Ideal of a Christian Church*. Speaking of his own experience he says, "For years, consciously or not, and in various shapes not recognised by me at the time, as modifications of the same symptoms, had my feelings been oppressed and (I may really say) tortured, by this heavy, unspiritual, unelastic, prosaic, unfeeling, unmeaning Protestant Spirit; all this time my ears were stunned with the din of self-laudation, with the words 'pure and apostolical,' 'evangelical truth and apostolical order,' and the like most miserable watchwords¹." Though I need hardly say that there is much in Mr Ward's Book, (now perhaps seldom read, though it made a great excitement twenty-five years ago,) of which it is impossible for any English Churchman to approve, still it appears to me valuable as for some other reasons so especially for this, that it tends to guard us more

¹ *The Ideal of a Christian Church*, p. 56.

than almost any book with which I am acquainted against self-satisfaction, and the spiritual stagnation which is almost sure to accompany that feeling.

NOTE G.

Bishop Cosin writes, "As for the new-coined word *transubstantiation*, it is hardly to be found before the middle of this (the twelfth) century. For the first that mention it are Petrus Blesensis, who lived under Pope Alexander the Third, and Stephen Eduensis, a Bishop, whose age and writings are very doubtful. And those later authors who make it as ancient as the tenth century, want sufficient witnesses to prove it by, as I said before.

"The thirteenth century now follows, wherein, the world growing both older and worse, a great deal of trouble and confusion there was about religion; the Bishop of Rome exalted himself not only into his lofty chair over the Universal Church, but even into a majestical throne over all the empires and kingdoms of the world. New orders of friars sprang up in this age, who disputed and clamoured fiercely against many doctrines of the ancients and purer Church, and amongst the rest against that of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ: so that now there remained nothing but to confirm the new tenet of transubstantiation, and impose it so peremptorily on the Christian world, that none might dare so much as to hiss against it. This Pope Innocent III.

bravely performed. He succeeded Celestin III. at thirty years of age, and, marching strictly in the footsteps of Hildebrand, called a council at Rome in St John Lateran, and was the first that ever presumed to make the new-devised doctrine of transubstantiation an article of faith necessary to salvation, and that by his own mere authority¹."

I refer particularly to Bishop Cosin because his history of this doctrine appears to me to be clearer than any other that I have read, and because he brings out so distinctly the point upon which I have laid stress, namely, that it is the definition of the manner of the presence, and not the presence itself, against which the objection of the Church of England is directed. For instance he writes: "Bellarmine confesseth with St Bernard, that 'Christ in the Sacrament is not given to us carnally, but spiritually:' and would to God he had rested here and not outgone the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of the fathers. For endeavouring, with Pope Innocent III. and the Council of Trent, to *determine the manner of the presence and manducation of Christ's body with more nicety than was fitting*, he thereby foolishly overthrew all that he had wisely said before, denied what he had affirmed, and opposed his own opinion. 'His fear was, lest his adversaries should apply that word spiritually, not so much to express the manner of presence, as to exclude the very substance of the

¹ Cosin's Works (Anglo Cath. Lib.), Vol. iv. p. 221.

Body and Blood of Christ: therefore,' saith he, 'upon that account it is not safe to use too much that of St Bernard, "The Body of Christ is not corporally in the Sacrament," without adding presently the above-mentioned explanation.' How much do we comply with human pride and curiosity, which would seem to understand all things! Where is the danger? and what doth he fear, as long as all they that believe the Gospel own the true nature and the *real and substantial presence* of the Body of Christ in the Sacrament, using that explication of St Bernard concerning the manner, which he himself, for the too great evidence of truth, durst not but admit? And why doth he own that the manner is spiritual, not carnal, and then require a carnal presence as to the manner itself? *As for us, we all openly profess, with St Bernard, that the presence of the Body of Christ in the Sacrament is spiritual, and therefore true and real; and, with the same Bernard and all the ancients, we deny that the Body of Christ is carnally either present or given. The thing we willingly admit, but humbly and religiously forbear to inquire into the manner¹."*

The above extracts are from the English translation: I conclude this note with the last section of Cosin's great work, which I will give in his own Latin, as it seems to me to suffer by translation. It sums up the subject in very few words.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

“Ex his a quovis, qui animum adverterit, facile observari potest transubstantiationis dogma novum esse; cunctis Scripturæ Sacræ et venerandæ antiquitatis præsiidiis destitutum; ex nonnullis obiter veterum dictis perperam intellectis, circa sæculi XII. medium, primo confictum; ante annum a Christo MCCXV. nullo decreto ecclesiastico, ne pontificio quidem, confirmatum; post, hic illic in Ecclesiâ tantum Romanâ receptum; variis disputationibus in scholâ ventilatum; tetrīs consequentiis obnoxium; a multis præstantissimis viris (nunquam enim defuerunt qui contradicerent) repudiatum: donec in sacrilego illo Constantiensi concilio susceptum; anno demum MDLI. in conciliabulo Tridentino, ab episcopis non adeo multis, iisque tantum Latinis, et sedis Romanæ mancipiis, aliis omnibus sub anathemate (nulli formidando) definitum; et præcepto papali (diro quidem, sed iniquissimo,) late nimis disseminatum. Cui non est cur fidem aut assensum præbeamus, priusquam demonstratum fuerit, vel Corpus Christi, nisi conversâ in Ipsum substantiâ panis, præsens exhiberi non posse, vel verbis Christi veritatem aliter non constare: quod nunquam fiet in eternum¹.”

I commend this paragraph to all those who believe that Holy Scripture and antiquity are the true guides of the Church of Christ, as containing the very pith of the matter.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

NOTE H.

As the *Summa Theologicæ* is probably not in every one's hands, and as the perusal of a few pages of it throws much light upon the manner in which Eucharistic doctrine was dealt with by the schoolmen, I shall venture to insert in this note several of the questions asked by Thomas Aquinas, and some of the answers to them, the rather because I have misquoted him in my sermon, and made him say, "Can the accidents of a thing exist without any *substance*?" whereas it should have been without any *subject*¹. The question and answer are both very mysterious, but the reader will find them both below, and can judge of them for himself. The extracts are from the Third Part of the *Summa*.

QUÆSTIO LXXV.

De conversione panis et vini in corpus et sanguinem Christi, in octo articulos divisa.

1. Utrum in hoc sacramento sit corpus Christi secundum veritatem, an solum secundum figuram, vel sicut in signo.

2. Utrum in hoc sacramento remaneat substantia panis et vini post consecrationem.

3. Utrum substantia panis vel vini post consecrationem hujus sacramenti annihiletur, aut in pristinam materiam resolvatur.

¹ Bishop Cosin speaks of the heresy of Marcion, "out of which fountain the Romish transubstantiators seem to have drawn their doctrine of accidents, abstracted from their subject, hanging in air, that is, subsisting on nothing."

4. Utrum panis possit converti in corpus Christi.

5. Utrum in hoc sacramento post conversionem remaneant accidentia panis et vini.

6. Utrum facta consecratione, remaneat in hoc sacramento forma substantialis panis.

7. Utrum ista conversio fiat in instanti.

8. Utrum hæc propositio sit falsa, Ex pane fit corpus Christi.

QUÆSTIO LXXVI.

De modo, quo Christus est in hoc sacramento, in octo articulos divisa.

1. Utrum totus Christus sit sub hoc sacramento.

2. Utrum totus Christus sit sub utraque specie sacramenti.

3. Utrum totus Christus sit sub qualibet parte specierum.

4. Utrum dimensiones corporis Christi totæ sint in hoc sacramento.

5. Utrum corpus Christi sit in hoc sacramento localiter.

6. Utrum corpus Christi moveatur ad motum hostiæ vel calicis post consecrationem.

7. Utrum corpus Christi prout est in hoc sacramento, possit videri ab aliquo oculo saltem glorificato.

8. Utrum verum corpus Christi remaneat in hoc sacramento, quando miraculosè apparet sub specie pueri vel carnis.

QUÆSTIO LXXVII.

De remanentibus in sacramento accidentibus, in octo articulos divisa.

1. Utrum accidentia quæ remanent sint sine subjecto.
2. Utrum quantitas dimensiva sit subjectum aliorum accidentium.
3. Utrum hujusmodi accidentia possint immutare aliquod corpus extrinsecum.
4. Utrum possint corrumpi.
5. Utrum ex eis possit aliquid generari.
6. Utrum possint nutrire.
7. De fractione panis consecrati.
8. Utrum vino consecrato possit aliquid permisceri.

I will now add a few of the more interesting or more curious answers.

Q. LXXV. 2.—Cum Christi corpus non possit incipere esse in Eucharistiâ nisi per conversionem substantiæ panis in ipsum, panis et vini substantiam in hoc sacramento non permanere fatendum est.

Q. LXXV. 4.—Cum verum Christi corpus non incipiat esse in sacramento per aliquam loci mutationem, necessarium est ibi esse per panis et vini in ipsum corpus conversionem, quæ conversio cum conversionibus naturalibus similis non sit, sed omnino supernaturalis, sola Dei virtute effecta, recte peculiari nomine transsubstantiatio dici potest.

Q. LXXV. 8.—Cum vocabulum, *Ex*, ordinem quendam extremorum denotet, hæc propositio, *Ex pane fit corpus Christi*, vera est et propria.

Q. LXXVI. 3.—Cum corpus Christi sit in hoc sacramento eo modo quo substantia est sub dimensionibus, manifestum est, totum Christum sub qualibet parte specierum panis aut vini contineri, sive frangatur hostia, sive integra remaneat.

Q. LXXVI. 5.—Cum Christus sit in hoc sacramento, non per modum quantitatis dimensionis, sed per modum substantiæ, non est in eo sicut in loco: sed eo modo quo substantia à dimensionibus continetur.

Q. LXXVI. 7.—Licet Christus in hoc sacramento per modum substantiæ existens, nec oculis corporeis, nec ab intellectu viatoris, nisi per fidem, conspici possit; ab intellectu tamen beato per divinæ essentiae visionem videri potest.

Q. LXXVII. 1.—Remanent accidentia panis et vini in sacramento in aliquo subjecto existentia, sed sola divina virtute sine subjecto existunt.

Q. LXXVII. 2.—Omnia accidentia præter quantitatem dimensionis, quæ remanent in sacramento, quamvis in nulla sint substantia, sunt tamen in quantitate dimensionis panis et vini tanquam in subjecto.

I have several reasons for introducing the above extracts. In the first place, they give a fair notion of the kind of questions which have been asked concerning the Holy Eucharist, and the kind of

answers which have been given. In the next place, they may possibly tempt some reader to turn to the *Summa Theologiæ*; the study of this strange effort of human ingenuity and industry will certainly be interesting, and I am disposed to believe not unprofitable. And lastly, such extracts are useful as suggesting the greatness of the blessing which flowed from the English Reformation, clearing away as it did these curious and obscure speculations and substituting for them definitions of sacramental doctrine at once more simple, more primitive, and more scriptural.

NOTE I.

The reader will find the passage to which reference is made, and Cranmer's reply, in the Parker Society's edition of Cranmer *On the Lord's Supper*, page 252. Cranmer had said, "Let us now consider also, how the same is against natural reason and natural operation, which, although they prevail not against God's word, yet when they be joined with God's word, they be of great moment to confirm any truth. Natural reason abhorreth *vacuum*, that is to say, that there should be any empty place, wherein no substance should be. But if there remain no bread nor wine, the place where they were before, and where their accidents be, is filled with no substance, but remaineth *vacuum*, clean contrary to the order of nature. We see also that the wine, though it be consecrated, yet will turn to vinegar, and the

bread will mould.,” and much more to the like purpose. To this Gardiner replies, amongst other things, as follows:—“The doctrine of transubstantiation doth not teach no earthly thing to remain in the sacrament, but contrariwise, that the visible form of bread and wine is there as the visible figure of the sacrament, and to be the same in greatness, in thickness, in weight, in savour, in taste, in propriety also to corrupt, putrify, and nourish as it did before; and yet the substance of those visible creatures to be converted into the substance, as Emissen saith, of the body of Christ. And here will reason do service to faith, to say if there be a conversion indeed, as faith teacheth, and none of the accidents be converted, then the substance is converted: for in every thing, all is substance and accidents; but the accidents be not changed, and yet a change there is; it must needs be then that substance is changed. Which deduction reason will make, and so agree with transubstantiation in convenient due service. And thus I have gotten reason’s good will, whatsoever this author saith, and from the ground of faith have by reason deduced such a conclusion to prove transubstantiation, as unless he destroy the true faith of the presence of Christ’s very body, which he cannot, must needs be allowed.”

To this Cranmer gives a long answer, which, as I have stated in my sermon, seems to me to be not quite satisfactory. The commencement is as follows:

“It is a strange thing that you should think

strangeness in my saying, that natural reason and operation joined to God's word should be of great moment to confirm any truth: not that they add any authority to God's word, but that they help our infirmity; as the sacraments do to God's promises, which promises in themselves are most certain and true. For did not the eating and drinking of Christ, His labouring and sweating, His agony and pangs of death, confirm the true faith of His incarnation? And did not His eating with the apostles confirm and establish their faith of His resurrection? Did not the sight of Christ and feeling of His wounds induce Thomas to believe that Christ was risen, when neither the report of the devout woman, nor yet of the apostles which did see Him, could cause him to believe in Christ's resurrection? And when they took our Saviour Christ for a spirit, did not He cause them, by their sight and feeling of His flesh and bones, to believe that He was very man, and no spirit, as they phantasied? Which sensible proofs were so far from derogation of faith, that they were a sure establishment thereof. Wherefore if your understanding cannot reach this doctrine, it is indeed very slender in godly things.

“And as for my reason of *vacuum*, you have not yet answered thereto, for nature suffereth not any place to be without some substance, which by means of his quantity filleth the place. And quantity without substance to fill any place is so far from the rules of nature, that by order of

nature quantity without substance hath neither filling nor being. And although I do not say, that by the doctrine of transubstantiation there remaineth nothing (so that all that you speak to answer that matter is to no purpose, but *res vacua*), yet by the doctrine of transubstantiation joined unto nature, there should remain utterly nothing indeed: for substance remaineth none by your doctrine of transubstantiation, and without substance can be no accidents by the rules of nature. Therefore comparing your doctrine and nature together, either you must recant your doctrine of transubstantiation, or confess that nothing remaineth; or at the least grant that your teaching repugneth to the order of nature; which sufficeth for me in this place, where my purpose is only to shew how the doctrine of transubstantiation is against nature and reason."

This kind of answer I have ventured to say does not seem to me quite satisfactory, because it does not recognise that the argument on the other side professedly runs into a supernatural and miraculous region: but I think that the specimen which I have given of the eucharistic controversy at the time of the Reformation may be useful to us, as suggesting the propriety of looking well in these days to the terms used and the axioms assumed in the argument. Here we find two Bishops of the sixteenth century solemnly introducing into Eucharistic controversy the principle that "natural reason abhorreth a *vacuum*." Cranmer first quotes

it, and Gardiner meets it by another principle, namely, that "quantity filleth the place rather than substance." Now we have long discovered that nature does not abhor a vacuum at all ; and with regard to quantity and not substance filling a place, this is, I suppose, a mere question of definition of terms : and so the whole of this argument collapses, and neither makes nor mars the doctrine in controversy. May not we learn from this the wisdom of considering whether a great deal of the controversy of the present day does not rest upon foundations quite as unsound ? Especially is it not worth considering whether the distinction between substance and accidents is not as futile as the principle that nature abhors a vacuum, or that quantity rather than substance filleth place ?

NOTE K.

It is with great hesitation that I suggest the possibility of Waterland having been misled upon this matter. The passage from his writings which I had chiefly in view was the following :—

"To say that the *communion* of our Lord's *body* and *blood* means the receiving His *natural* flesh and blood into our *mouths*, under the *forms*, *accidents*, or *appearances* of bread and wine, is manifestly a *forced* and *late* interpretation ; not heard of for eight hundred years or more, and, besides, absurd, contradictory, and impossible. If we may trust to our *reason* or to our *senses* (and if we may not,

what is there that we can trust to?), the bread and wine do remain, after *consecration*, the same in *substance* as before, changed only as to their *uses, relations, or offices*. Besides, Christ's body *broken* and blood *shed* 1,700 years ago, are no more in that capacity, nor ever will be; and therefore it is absolutely impossible that they should be literally *present* in the Sacrament, or made *food* to the communicants. To all which may be added, that the elements, after consecration, are still expressly called *bread* and *wine* in this very place (1 Cor. x. 16, &c.), and therefore supposed *to be* what they are called¹."

Now I apprehend that this representation of the doctrine of transubstantiation is not one which a Roman Catholic would acknowledge, because it appeals to the senses, and this is just the appeal which the Roman Catholic repudiates; and the use of the term *substance* is clearly different from that attached by Gardiner in the extract given in the preceding note. Hence I have ventured to say that Waterland seemed to have been misled. It is to be observed however that my inference is not that Waterland should be blamed, but that a use of language must be unsafe which could mislead such a man.

¹ Waterland's Works (Oxford, 1856), Vol. iv. p. 613. In like manner Bishop Cosin writes, "Though God by His Almightyness be able to turn the substance of bread into some other substance, yet none will believe that He doth it, as long as it appears to our senses that the substance of the bread doth still remain whole and entire."

NOTE L.

I had in my mind when composing this paragraph the following passage from the *Kiss of Peace*. The author quotes the Tridentine definitions, and then writes thus :

“Now, have we, I ask, in the whole range of our Liturgy, Articles, and Catechism, any more emphatic declaration of a wholly supernatural, transcendental, celestial Presence, or any more emphatic disclaimer of a natural, sensible, corporeal Presence than this ?

“What ! you will exclaim, here have I been taught to believe from childhood upwards, that the Church of Rome held the Wine in the Cup to be Blood, in that very sense, in which we hold it to be Wine,—Blood, that is, after the same natural mode of existence as if the Cup were filled with the drops direct from the wounded Body itself. And here, I am told, that this Wine—a liquid and not a solid substance—is the Body, in the same sense as it is the Blood ; and the Bread—a solid and not a liquid substance—is the Blood, in the same sense as it is the Body ; and further, that this Wine is Body and Blood, yea, Soul and Divinity of the Lord. And not only this, but that in each infinitesimal crumb of the Bread, and in each minutest drop of the Wine, the Lord and Maker of all things, the Risen Saviour, is, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity,

wholly present! Is this the exalted, the majestic, the glorious belief of a Church whose doctrines I have hitherto regarded as those of a gross, carnal, sensuous materialism? Are these the pure heights of faith to which *that* Church soars which I have always denounced as grovelling in the darkest depths of superstition, and trafficking in meretricious trickeries and deceptions of the sense? These notions of her idolatries and witchcraft, of her earthly and corporeal degradation, I have sucked in with my mother's milk; they have grown with me in every fibre of my frame; they have coursed with the blood through every vein of my body. Are they then all a dream? and do I now awake to find myself face to face with a form of belief in which all is so high, all so heavenly, all so far removed beyond all experience of sense, all conception of thought, and all demonstration of reason, that even the eye of faith herself is dazzled by the unwonted purity of that light, and she can only veil her face with cherubic wing, as she stands paralysed in the presence of a truth so grand, so sublime, so radiant with the glory of the City of God¹?"

It will be observed that great stress is laid upon the high and heavenly character of the doctrine which has been quoted from the Tridentine decrees, but nothing is said about its scriptural basis and its truth. I presume that it would be possible to write a passage, quite as glowing as that above

¹ *Kiss of Peace*, p. 104.

transcribed, concerning the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin ; I doubt not that pious Roman Catholics regard that doctrine as so far removed beyond all conception of thought, and all demonstration of reason, that even the eye of faith herself is dazzled, &c. &c. But does this make the doctrine *true*? and does not the danger of ever accumulating error commence as soon as you leave the sure scriptural foundation?

It is curious to observe how that our author, although he has told us (p. 56), that “the *substance* of a thing is wholly beyond the reach of the senses ; it eludes the most subtle analysis we can bring to bear upon it ; and we know nothing of it save its existence, to deny which would be to contradict a universal instinct of the human mind, and to introduce a hopeless irreconcilability between human thought and human language,” does nevertheless in the passage above quoted speak of wine as “a liquid and not a solid *substance*,” and of bread as “a solid and not a liquid *substance*,” thus apparently adopting that very phraseology which in practice is almost certain to materialise the doctrine of Transubstantiation. In like manner Hooker, in the fine passage which I have quoted towards the end of this sermon, says : “this bread hath in it more than the *substance* which our eyes behold ;” evidently taking the substance of a thing as *not* being “wholly beyond the reach of the senses.” And so I come round again to my conclusion,—can a definition of doctrine be justified which rests upon

no warrant of Scripture, and which is almost certain to assume a materialistic form, not only in the worship of simple people, but in the language of careful divines?

NOTE M.

In the *Guardian* of February 24, a few days before Sermon IV. was preached, appeared a letter from Mr Plumptre, in which several objections are made to the terms *subjective* and *objective* as used in the Eucharistic controversy. The grounds are different from that urged by me; but the conclusion of the letter fits in very well with my view, and is I think worthy of consideration. "I am not fond," writes Mr Plumptre, "of new terms in questions such as this; but if one be sought for as an *eirenicon* in which different schools of thought may agree without ambiguity and without confusion, it would seem to me more Scriptural and more safe, less tainted with the leaven of transitory metaphysical systems, to speak of the '*dynamic*' presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, than to use any of the more familiar and more scholastic terms. That word would express the truth that in that sacrament Christ is present, not locally, not materially, but *ἐν δυνάμει*, in the power which it has to bring faithful recipients into fellowship with Him, and to bring

even the unfaithful within the range of a might which cannot leave them as they were."

It would be practically impossible I conceive to introduce such a word as *dynamic* in the manner proposed, and indeed in a subsequent letter Mr Plumptre allows that "effectual" or "efficient" would express the meaning as well as "dynamic:" but whatever be the word suggested, the principle of the suggestion is the same, namely, to remove the question of the presence out of that region which is supposed to be dominated by the two all-comprehending terms objective and subjective. This suggestion, in whatever form it be conveyed, appears to me extremely valuable.

NOTE N.

At a public meeting, held in Freemasons' Tavern, on January 12, 1869, on the subject of the judgment given in the suit of *Martin v. Mackonochie*, one clergyman is reported to have said, "If they extinguished their lights how were they to teach their people? They had hitherto taught them to regard that as the central doctrine of the faith which the lights on the Altar did but typify; for if they signified that Christ was the very Light of the world, they also implied that He was really and truly present." And another is reported to have spoken thus: "He had for nearly twenty years celebrated with lighted candles, and had for

the last twelve years taught the people the blessing and truth of our blessed Lord's Presence; and he had always taught them that the lighted candles were a part of a symbol of the Church allowed by the Church of England, to set forth the great doctrine of the Real Presence. If after all he put out his lights, he should feel he was stultifying himself in his people's eyes."

Of course it is easy to sympathise with persons who have been deprived by a judicial decision of a piece of symbolism, which they have gradually been led to prize very highly: but nothing can lead more to the depreciation of the value of a doctrine and to the promotion of doubt concerning its truth, than the assertion that it cannot be effectively taught without certain special ornaments and ceremonies.

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